

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

JOHN WESLEY MORTON, JR

INTERVIEW 1018

This is Dr. Joseph Patterson representing the Memories of New Bern Committee. My number is 1000. I am interviewing Jack Morton at his home at 226 New Street in New Bern. The number of the interview is 1018. The date is November 5, 1992.

DR. PATTERSON: Jack, it's good to be here talking to you this morning and I really appreciate your letting me come, and so does the Memories of New Bern Committee of which you're a member. We really appreciate this opportunity to talk to you. What I'd like to do first of all is just to ask you to tell me something about yourself and your family. I'd like to know your full name, where you were born, who your mother and father were, any siblings, and just a story of your getting where you are now.

MR. MORTON: Well, Joe Pat, my mother and father were John Wesley Morton and Ethel Jane Williams. My father was born in Onslow County and my mother was born in Vanceboro in northern Craven County. They met in New Bern where she was a Western Union telegrapher, and at that time he was working for the Cutler Hardware store immediately after World War I. He later left Cutler Hardware and went into business with Mr. J. Vernon Blades and formed Morton Motor Company. That was about 1927 or '28.

DR. PATTERSON Car dealership.

MR. MORTON: Right. They handled Rio, Rio Speed Wagon, Franklin, Hudson, Essex, and Star. Most people won't recognize those names, but they were all different and they were quite something for the day.

I was born February 16, 1927 on Rhem Avenue. The house has been

destroyed, but it was right where the Calvary Baptist Church presently exists. We moved to Spencer Avenue less than a block away in 1933.

I spent my childhood on Spencer Avenue attending Eleanor Marshall Elementary School. Then as I got older, I had to go downtown to New Bern High School, which was in 1938 or '39. I went to New Bern High School until 1943 at which time I entered Hargrave Military Academy in Chatham, Virginia where I was graduated June of '45. Three days after I graduated, I went in the Army. I was drafted in the Army during World War II. I went from there to Camp Wheeler Georgia where I had basic training. After Truman ordered the dropping of the bomb over Hiroshima, I ended up in the Pentagon building in Washington D.C. where I spent the rest of my military career. I was discharged in September of '46 and entered what was then Wake Forest College at Wake Forest, North Carolina. I spent a year and a half there, came back to New Bern and went into business with my father. This was in late 1947.

We were involved in the automobile business then from that time until I bought him out in 1962. We were selling Hudsons and Packards at the time. Later, Ramblers or Nash. Then Packard merged with Studebaker and ultimately went out of business. Hudson merged with Nash and ultimately went out of business. And I got out of the automobile business January 1, 1975. I just closed up and liquidated because my companies had gone belly up and I saw no future for me in the automobile business. I then went into the real estate business and have been in it ever since. Right now, I live on New Street in downtown New Bern and enjoy life to the fullest.

DR. PATTERSON Where was your dealership located?

MR. MORTON: It was on 408 Tryon Palace Drive right next to Security Finance. It was west of Security Finance Company or right across the street from Interstate Securities. By the way, I built the Interstate Securities building and traded it to my father for the stock in the company in 1962.

DR. PATTERSON Jack, what is your full name?

MR. MORTON: John Wesley Morton, Jr.

DR. PATTERSON But you're always called just Jack Morton.

MR. MORTON: Always.

DR. PATTERSON Now, what about marriage and children?

MR. MORTON: I was married June 10, 1950 the first time. I have three children; John Wesley, III, another son, Edward Paul, and a daughter, Sarah Catherine who lives in High Point. The two boys live here.

DR. PATTERSON And you've been remarried?

MR. MORTON: I've remarried. I left my first wife September 9, 1982 and two years later I was remarried.

DR. PATTERSON Jack, who were some of the people who were associated with you and your father in the automobile business?

MR. MORTON: Well, some of them were very interesting. Earl Smith was one. Earl was a salesman ever since I can remember. Earl was eighty-eight I believe when he died just three or four years ago. Then, Martin Van Buren Davis, Sr. was a mechanic with us for over fifty years. He is still living. He is in his mid-nineties and he and his

wife both are living in a rest home in New Bern. His son lives around the corner at 411 East Front Street in a house I use to own.

DR. PATTERSON That's where the Claypoole's lived too.

MR. MORTON: That's where the Claypoole's lived. One of the most interesting persons though I was ever involved with in the automobile dealership was Franklin Roosevelt, Jr. He was the importer of Fiat automobiles. He came down on numerous occasions to visit with me and I enjoyed knowing him. He has since passed away of course.

DR. PATTERSON Let me ask you a general question and then we'll get into some specifics. How would you describe New Bern when you grew up here as a boy?

MR. MORTON: I think I would describe it as "To Kill A Mockingbird." Is that good enough?

DR. PATTERSON Well, go into it a little more than that. I understand.

MR. MORTON: I thought you would. It was a real sleepy little town but it was an interesting town. There was always something going on. As you will find out when we get a little further in this interview, a lot of things happened here. I remember the river as being the dominant feature of New Bern always.

DR. PATTERSON The Neuse.

MR. MORTON: The Neuse, yes. Well, the Neuse mainly, yes. Because I remember all those sailing vessels. They used to freight lumber out of here every day and they had no power whatever. The tow boat, which my mother always made me call it tow because she said they weren't

tugs, would tow the ship through the bridge and then she was on her own. But they were three and four masted schooners.

DR. PATTERSON Well, I think as we talk that the picture of New Bern as you remember it will evolve. So let's go ahead with some specifics. You know so much about this town that I think the best way to conduct this interview is just to turn it over to you and say, "Jack, tell us about it the way it was."

MR. MORTON: Well, I'll try to. There's so many things about New Bern. I don't know really where to start. I reckon I'll start with the moonshining industry. I was very familiar with that because our place of business back in the thirties was next door to Goldman's junk yard.

DR. PATTERSON Where was that?

MR. MORTON: That was on Tryon Palace Drive.

DR. PATTERSON South Front Street.

MR. MORTON: South Front Street, right. It was right next to us. In fact, my used car lot was part of the junk yard. Which when Mr. Goldman left, we bought that. The rest of it is where Security Finance is now. But the officers used to bring the stills into Mr. Goldman and chop them up and sell the copper to him, which was considerable. But you've got to remember that that was one of our biggest industries really even though it was confined to a small percentage of the population. Everybody had their finger in the pot.

The bootleggers all had to have cars and boats and they had to have smoke screens installed on them. Most people don't know what a smoke

screen is. But it was a device that you could dump a load of, it was a sulphur type of compound, into the muffler and it would blow this tremendous screen of smoke and nobody could penetrate it because they couldn't see. They used them extensively around here.

DR. PATTERSON So they could get away.

MR. MORTON: So they could get away, yes. See, if they could get far enough away, they'd throw all the whiskey out of the car and then there was no evidence left. Then the legislature made it a felony to even possess a smoke screen, so it cut their use down right much.

I remember so many things. For instance, Sgt. Bissett's '36 Ford Coupe had a hole in the windshield about as big as a coffee can so that he could shoot at cars through the windshield while chasing them.

It had a hinged glass flap that would slide over it to keep the wind out when he wasn't using it for shooting. They hauled thousands of gallons of corn whiskey out. In fact, you remember that very prominent grocery man got involved and was indicted for selling sugar and jars to the moonshiners. The federal government couldn't figure out how a hundred thousand half gallon jars could be used for canning pickles.

DR. PATTERSON Where were the moonshiners located?

MR. MORTON: Most of them were located in the north Harlowe area of Craven County, but they actually extended from New Bern all the way to Harlowe. It was quite an elaborate operation. They were financed by many legitimate business men right here in New Bern whom I won't name. The interest was high. The monetary interest is what I'm saying.

A man could make a fortune for himself just by financing the

bootleggers and the moonshiners, which there is a difference. I wanted to get on that. I have one little story that you might be interested in hearing. There used to be a fellow down on New South Front Street named Albert. I don't know what his last name was. He ran a speak easy down there. The police every time they'd break the door down on a raid, they'd get in there and there was no whiskey. So they got to thinking, and one night they were going to raid the house. One of them crawled under the house which was open and unscrewed the trap to the sink. Then they beat on the door. He had a big bucket under the sink and when they started pouring the whiskey down the sink, they caught every bit of it and they got a conviction. I remember that because I was there. Another story that is interesting, and I was not here then but Andrew and Reed Fuller used to talk about it all the time and they were mighty good friends of mine, a group were drinking one afternoon and they include Ferguson, the piano tuner, and a blind man, and I forgotten his name, and two or three others. They got so drunk that none of them could drive. So, they put the blind man driving the car and they would tell him where to go. They got going down Middle Street towards the river and they forgot to tell him to turn on South Front and he went right in the river in the car. Not a one of them got hurt. But that's some of the crazy things that went on back then.

There were a lot of things that I remember. For instance, gasoline pumps. They were all pumped up by hand. You remember that. A big glass bowl at the top that was marked off on gallons. I thought it was interesting because at night when they were going to close the

business up, if they'd of left gasoline up there somebody would of gotten it. They'd have cut the hose or something. So they had a device to where they could let the gasoline back down into the tanks at night and nobody could do a thing cause they didn't have the crank to pump the tank up. Another thing I remember, and this goes back to my earliest childhood when I was just getting around, the Fuller's lived in the house that Dr. Ashford later had, which is now owned by Hovey Aiken...

DR. PATTERSON On Pollock Street.

MR. MORTON: On Pollock Street. That house did not have electricity in it at that time during my life time. The reason I mention it is that a lot of houses didn't have electricity that you would expect would. They had gas light. And of course New Bern had that old coal gas plant down on South Front Street. But they lighted that house with gas. And they didn't need refrigeration because they had ice boxes.

DR. PATTERSON How long was it before New Bern became completely electrified?

MR. MORTON: Well, I don't think it's completely electrified now. (laughter) Back then, there was a lot of resistance to electrification. When I was a child, my uncle down in Onslow County didn't want electricity but his wife just absolutely insisted. So he had a line brought in and put one light in the kitchen and that was the only fixture in the place, was one socket in the kitchen of his house. I think another interesting thing in New Bern for instance, there was a lot of resistance to indoor plumbing. I remember lots of people as a young

child, they just weren't going to bring the privy in the house.

DR. PATTERSON Why?

MR. MORTON: Because of the connotation. They didn't realize how much more sanitary indoor plumbing was. My grandfather didn't want a bathroom. He just wasn't gonna have it. He wasn't gonna have the privy in the house. Later, my father insisted and put a modern bathroom in his house but my grandfather was in his nineties at that time. Another thing, just to show you how hard headed people were, they're just like we are today, it's just different things, people didn't want electric starters on their cars. I've actually seen my father tell the mechanic to take it off cause the customer wouldn't accept an electric starter on a car.

DR. PATTERSON They wanted to crank it?

MR. MORTON: They wanted to crank it. Of course you got to remember then, back in the early thirties, you couldn't walk down Middle Street without seeing somebody with their arm in a sling where the thing had kicked and broken their arm. You remember that?

DR. PATTERSON Yes.

MR. MORTON: Sure you do. But they said, "If I can't crank it, I don't need it. If I'm not able to crank it, I don't need it." Same way with bumpers. I remember Miss Georgia Oxley. You remember her. She bought a car and she said take the bumpers off, I don't need them. Of course they were an accessory, so we had to take the bumpers off.

DR. PATTERSON Do you remember electric cars?

MR. MORTON: I remember only one electric car and I don't recall

who had it, but it seems like it was Mrs. Owen G. Dunn. The only electric car that I ever saw except in a museum or in display was in New Bern.

But I remember almost every other kind of car. I remember that Nathan Frank had a Cord when he ran the Sugar Bowl down on Middle Street and I used to ooh and aah over that all the time. It was a magnificent car.

DR. PATTERSON My mother had an electric car.

MR. MORTON: Did she?

DR. PATTERSON That's the one I remember. She kept it in the garage behind the house.

MR. MORTON: I'll be darned. I didn't know that. I knew there was one electric car that I saw in New Bern. It was very, very quiet.

My father one time traded for a great big old Pierce Arrow. It had two twenty gallon fuel tanks on it. One on either side. So, he filled the car up one day and we were going to Swansboro to see my grandmother and grandfather and on the way back we ran out of fuel. That was a seventy mile around trip. (laughter) But a lot happened back then.

We were quite mischievous. For instance, the railroad track ran within a block of our house and there was tremendous activity. Because that was the only way you could move anything sixty years ago. There wasn't any trucking industry as we know it today. It went by rail. We'd go to the service station and they'd give us five gallons of burnt cylinder oil and we'd pull it in our wagon over to the railroad to grease the tracks real good. The train would stop to get water at the watering hole there in front of the old casino and then they'd

couldn't get it moving again. So then they had to send a man walking up to the round house to bring a mule and cart full of sand down there to put on the tracks so that they could get traction again. It was terrible but we thought it was just great. Cars were very interesting to me my entire life. When we would go to Swansboro, the minute you got to Jones County the pavement ended and it was mud roads from then on. I remember many times, and all of us children and we were quite small, we still had to get out and push the car to get it through the different mud stickings that we ran into. Another interesting thing was Mr. Tolson who ran a dray from Swansboro to New Bern. There weren't any railroad and of course there wasn't any bus line and there wasn't any good roads. But he had a flatbed truck and he'd come to New Bern with a list from all of the residences down there and he would either do their shopping for them or they would sit with their legs hanging off the edge of the flatbed truck and ride up here. For a fee of course.

But he would go to all the different wholesalers like Lucas and Lewis and Armstrong Grocery, George Roberts and all those grocery stores and he'd buy their provisions. He came up every week. We wouldn't think it was very funny today to see an eighty year old woman and an eighty year man riding in the back of a flatbed truck with their legs hanging off, but that's the way it was. The Depression left quite an impression on me. There wasn't anything. Nobody had anything.

I remember more vividly than anything the families, I mean white and black, that would come to the back door just begging for anything to eat. I never knew of anybody that didn't share whatever they had with

them. They were not bums, they were not hobos. They were people that had ridden up on the train in an empty boxcar or something and they just wanted something to eat. They were hungry. I think that the hunger stuck with me more than anything else.

DR. PATTERSON Wasn't there some lady, I think you told me about this, who was so good to these people that they would come back to her all the time?

MR. MORTON: Maybe that was somebody else, but there were a lot of people that way. For instance, this was much later than the Depression, Tommy Leris who ran Williams Cafe never turned anyone away from a meal if they said they were hungry and didn't have any money.

I've actually been in there and seeing people eat and leaving without paying and get in a Cadillac automobile and go on their way. Because the word travelled fast. People don't know that about Tommy because he never acknowledged it. He wouldn't speak about it. But he wouldn't turn anyone away ever! Also, the Salvation Army had a contract with Tommy that if they had somebody that they couldn't feed they would send them down there and he would charge it to the Salvation Army.

But people pretty well helped people during this period of time. We never went hungry, but my father, on many occasions, would take a barrel of potatoes on a repair bill or a bunch of chickens. Of course, everybody had a chicken coop back then and you kept live chickens all the time. When you wanted one, you'd go out and get one and kill it and dress it and that's what you ate. But potatoes we ate for every meal because they were only fifty cents a barrel in the early thirties

and there were plenty of them. Another thing we had plenty of was cabbage. I don't even think cabbage ran a cent a pound it was so cheap.

DR. PATTERSON Would you buy vegetables from the ladies selling them down in the streets?

MR. MORTON: Oh yes! That's where we bought all of our vegetables. You have to recall that even canned vegetables weren't real popular, commercially canned vegetables. We would buy them mostly from the negro women who would come through hawking them singing their song. It was very colorful. They would carry this big load on their head, which you wouldn't see how in the world they could balance it much less lift it. But they did. In the mornings you could look over at the Trent River bridge as it came into George Street and you could see a solid steady line of these old women bringing their wares to New Bern. Some would head to Ghent and some would head to Riverside and some would work the downtown section. We knew them by name. Of course in winter time we didn't get much produce except there were always collards.

DR. PATTERSON And fish.

MR. MORTON: And fish. Now you have to remember this. I never ate a piece of fresh fish until after the war. They didn't have ice. It was available but the fish hawkers didn't buy it. They wrapped the fish in old newspapers. I did not like fish. Now it's my very favorite food of all. I'll tell you something else that's interesting and you'd know this. Shrimp were almost worthless because there was no way to keep them. If somebody caught a bunch of shrimp, they had

to eat them right then. Cause they don't even travel well with ice. They don't have a very long shelf life. But most of the fish that they shipped out of here would live pretty well or would keep pretty well if you iced them down.

DR. PATTERSON Now, a lot of oysters came in too.

MR. MORTON: Oh yes. Oysters and terrapins. Every fish market that I ever remembered carried terrapins. Of course, Mack Lupton had an oyster cannery over on the James City side and that's where all the oyster shells for our streets came from. Back in those days if you recall, the trash wagons were used for hauling oyster shells when they weren't used for hauling trash. They were all horse drawn even until well after World War II. Now a lot of people don't know that.

DR. PATTERSON Where did the oyster and shrimp come from?

MR. MORTON: Pamlico Sound.

DR. PATTERSON The boats would come down the river to New Bern and bring them in.

MR. MORTON: And bring them in. If you recall, the city wharves were down on Craven Street and Middle Street so you could drive a boat almost up to South Front Street at both places. They had fuel down there and they had good moorings. They came directly up here because there was no need to unload them and put them on a car when water transportation is the cheapest and really the most reliable that you can get.

DR. PATTERSON How long did those piers and wharves last?

MR. MORTON: They were constantly repairing them. But they had

been there I suppose a hundred years or more.

DR. PATTERSON When were they taken down?

MR. MORTON: They were taken down when the urban redevelopment went in there.

DR. PATTERSON About when was that?

MR. MORTON: That was about 1960. In the sixties.

DR. PATTERSON I remember my children used to come in by boat from Trent Shores in New Bern and tie up at those docks down there and go visit their friends.

MR. MORTON: That's right. I did the same thing.

DR. PATTERSON One of my kids was only six years old and she would come in in her little boat. She couldn't drive a car but she could drive a boat.

MR. MORTON: Well, I always kept a boat down in there some place. I either kept it at Barbour Boat Works or I kept it at the pier at the end of Hancock Street or I kept it at the pier at the back of the coca-cola plant.

DR. PATTERSON Jack, let me ask you about the shells being used for the streets. Were most of the streets paved with shells?

MR. MORTON: Most of the side streets were paved with shells and they were dreadfully painful when you fell off your bicycle or got knocked down by another boy when you were playing. So you didn't do much playing in the streets. Now once they got packed, they were fine.

But when they were put down, you have got to recall, they were normally freshly shucked so they put out quite an odor. You could smell a street

in New Bern easily.

DR. PATTERSON The main streets were brick.

MR. MORTON: Well, actually, some of the main streets were brick. That brings another story and you might have heard it, but it's true. I knew Mr. C. J. McCarthy pretty well as did everybody else. He was the mayor at the time and a developer of Ghent and owned also the trolley service. He finally persuaded the city to brick Pollock Street. They voted to brick it. He was smart. He started at the far end of Pollock Street because he knew if they started downtown they'd never finish it. He started out there and came toward New Bern with it.

DR. PATTERSON Where his business was located.

MR. MORTON: Where his business was located. Yes sir. And where his fountain was. Do you recall that big old fountain that used to ice over so beautifully in the winter time?

DR. PATTERSON Yes. Was that moved to Cedar Grove Cemetery? I've heard that story.

MR. MORTON: I haven't heard that story. I haven't seen it if it was. But Mr. McCarthy was quite a visionary. He's the one that had the fairgrounds over across from Park Avenue. If you went over there and looked, you would find the concrete foundations for the various concessions still there. It was a right elaborate fairground.

DR. PATTERSON Which side of Park Avenue was that on? Trent River side?

MR. MORTON: Trent River side, yeah. In fact when I was a boy, the circus would put up there. It would always come in on the train.

The train would reach from End Street which is now First Street all the way down and almost to Trent Road. We would get up at three o'clock in the morning and go meet that train and actually haul water for the elephants and things like that to try to wheedle passes and tickets out of them, which sometimes we did. But they put that show up and they had the afternoon's performance and they had the evening performance and they knocked it down and put it on the train and went to another town the very next day.

DR. PATTERSON You remember Chatauqua?

MR. MORTON: No.

DR. PATTERSON Well, Chatauqua used to set up on the school green across from the Masonic Theater in a big long tent. Jack, what are your memories of Broad Street before the bridge was put in at the foot?

MR. MORTON: Oh, it was a wonderful street! It was broad. Of course it wasn't as broad as it is now and it was only two lanes, but they were two wide lanes. There were sidewalks and there was a lot of lawn between the sidewalk and the curbing and there were enormous shade trees the entire length of it. I've always resented the fact that the highway was brought through that way because there was a lot of objection to it. The merchants that owned buildings along Broad Street are the ones that finally got it ramrodded through, and they lost everything because it killed commerce on Broad Street. It also killed one of the prettiest residential sections of this town. It was still the real Broad Street when you had your office on it. I remember that so well. There were wide sidewalks and trees between

the sidewalks and the curbing. It was a nice street.

DR. PATTERSON Well, you're telling some wonderful stories about New Bern. Maybe you ought to check your list again and continue on down.

MR. MORTON: Well, I'll see what I can do. One of the stories that I mention to you that most people aren't aware was the story of the "Prolific." That was their spelling too. She was moored down at Barbour Boat Works for a long time.

DR. PATTERSON The ship?

MR. MORTON: She was as I recall about seventy feet long, typical old world construction, all wood, all sail. I've forgotten how many Estonian refugees or displaced persons she brought, but it seems like it was around seventy.

DR. PATTERSON What year was this Jack?

MR. MORTON: It was 1946. They landed at Wilmington where they were distributed to other areas. Then the ship was towed up here. There was a lot of problems because of registration. It was a foreign ship and it was from a communist dominated country and nobody could solve the legal problems with it the way I was told. Finally in about '49, it was bought I believe by Clayton Fulcher who solved the legal problems with it and towed it away to make some sort of a fishing boat out of it. But at one time, I had part of the log from her. In the years that have ensued it's gotten misplaced and I don't have any idea where it is.

DR. PATTERSON How did you get that?

MR. MORTON: It was there. It was abandoned and I took it.

DR. PATTERSON Where was the ship abandoned?

MR. MORTON: At Barbour Boat Works. Between the bridge and Barbour Boat Works. She was a big, beamy, old ship. She was old.

DR. PATTERSON Now, the refugees didn't come to New Bern. They stayed in Wilmington.

MR. MORTON: They were distributed in Wilmington. They did not come to New Bern. They had no cooking facilities aboard the ship and they had no furnishings. They'd just lay around in the hold. The only thing they had for heat was a coal stove, a regular old coal stove.

It was a terrible, terrible trip for sure. Thinking about out there where McCarthy's fairgrounds where, the old casino, it was a monstrous, old building.

DR. PATTERSON This is the old Ghent casino?

MR. MORTON: Yeah, the old Ghent casino. We thought it was an old, old building. Which it wasn't old at all back then. It was only about ten years old. But it was big. I remember a preacher. I remember his name well, but I didn't even know who he was. He would get up on the stage and practice his sermons. His name I recall was Southgate Beaman. Of course we would hoot and jeer and clap and do all those terrible things that kids do. One day we were all standing out there trying to think of some kind of trouble to get into, which wasn't very hard, and a wind came up and blew the darn thing down.

DR. PATTERSON The casino?

MR. MORTON: Blew it completely to the ground and it was a big

structure! I mean it destroyed it completely in one fell swoop. I mean in five seconds it was gone.

DR. PATTERSON You were not in it?

MR. MORTON: We were not in it, but we could have just as well been in it.

DR. PATTERSON Was it a storm or just a freak wind?

MR. MORTON: Just a freak wind. Just blew it down. Another thing that people don't remember, or a lot of them don't, I was thinking of the "Pamlico" cutter. Back in those days, people weren't so darn insurance happy or so regulation happy and on pretty weekends the captain and the crew of the "Pamlico" would invite the citizens to take a trip down the river aboard her. It was quite a nice outing and it was free. You just go up, get aboard, and they'd steam on down the river, stay a couple of hours and steam back. But it was good public relations for the Coast Guard. They were a very integral part of New Bern anyhow. They were members of the community. I think the highest grade officer they ever had on it was a lieutenant. But they did a good job and they fished us out of the river regularly if you recall when we would turn over in our sailboats. In fact, we used to turn them over purposely and they got so they wouldn't come get us when they suspected that. Another interesting thing and this was later on, this was in the late thirties and early and mid-forties even, was the azalea train that used to go to Wilmington for the azalea festival. They'd make up a train here in New Bern. The fare was almost nothing and so you'd ride the train to Wilmington and get off and go

look at the azaleas and then come back. It was a very festive affair particularly for the children. They always looked forward to the azalea festival and riding that train down there. You know, you talking about crazy things though. After I came back from the Army, Norman Kellum's father kept a yoke of oxen in the lot across the street from us on Spencer Avenue. That's just where he stored them and where they fed.

A yoke of oxen, in this modern day and age! Another thing that was interesting and it goes back to antiquated plumbing, and you recall them very well, the public watering holes that we had in this town.

There was one where Spring Street meets Pollock Street. It's right in the middle of the street. There was another one down at Liberty Street. And there was another one down close to where BLG Electric is now. They were city owned and city maintained so that people could get fresh water. So in the morning you'd see children with buckets lined up to fill their buckets and carry the water home because they didn't have any water.

DR. PATTERSON Were there places for horses to drink too?

MR. MORTON: What they did, they were right big places about four feet or five feet square with a big basin and the horses could drink out of the basin when somebody didn't have a bucket in the way. But that shows you how many people did not have running water.

DR. PATTERSON Now this was spring water.

MR. MORTON: No, it was city water. But people relied on it. It was the only water they had. Something happened back in the thirties that I'll never forget and it goes back here again to plumbing. Steve

Fowler, which is Steve Fowler, Sr., owned a lot of rental houses over in the Duffyfield section. In fact, I think he owned close to two hundred. Maintaining them was quite a problem. So one day a lumber truck started unloading lumber on the lot beside his house which was vacant (the lot) at the time. They unloaded a big old pile of lumber.

I mean several truck loads. Then a crew of carpenters came up and started building outhouses, all alike. I believe they built seventy outhouses and parked them on that lot. Then as he needed to replace them in his rental units, they would come up with a dray or something like that and get them and distribute. For several years we had outhouses on Spencer Avenue by the dozens. (laughter) I'll never forget one time, this was back later about 1950 or so. I had a black man working for me named Irvin Commetier. One day I had Irvin waxing my airplane. This was a long time ago. This was forty years ago at least.

I called him Bo. I said, "Bo, when you get through polishing this airplane, I'm gonna take you for a ride." He kept on rubbing. He says, "No sir. I don't think so." I said, "Well, what's the matter Bo? Are you afraid?" He said, "Yes sir." I said, "Well, don't you know that you ain't got to go til the Lord calls you?" He said, "Yes sir. But suppose we get up there and the Lord calls you?" (laughter)

It was funny. He was just as serious as cancer.

DR. PATTERSON What kind of plane did you have?

MR. MORTON: I've had close to twenty airplanes. This happened to be a J-4 Cub. It was built in 1939. But I've owned almost everything that Piper made including a Pacer. I've owned a Swift which was a

retractable gear, all metal low-wing. I've owned a Tri-pacer, a Cessna 172, an Ercoup. I've owned a Beachcraft, a Musketeer. But my favorite airplanes of all of them were three Beachcraft V-tail Bonanzas. That was what I always called my magic carpet. It was fast, it held four people, and it was economical to operate. Ironically when they first came out in '47, they were \$7,900. Today, and they're built on the same jig, they're \$250,000 if you can imagine it.

DR. PATTERSON Where did you keep your planes?

MR. MORTON: At the Simmons-Nott Airport. Named for your grandfather. I was there the day Lt. Nott was killed at Simmons-Nott.

A friend of mine, William Ray Brewer, got a piece of the instrument panel as a souvenir. That was a tragic day. I remember Trent Acres.

Trent Acres was the area that is just beyond the Wilson Creek bridge on the left. It's where Fred Conderman and several people later built houses. But at one time there were no buildings whatever on that piece of property. The National Guard used to go over there and do their practice firing of machine guns and rifles and things like that. Right that close to New Bern. There was no other place to go.

DR. PATTERSON Did the Catholic church own that property?

MR. MORTON: No, the Catholic church never owned that property. The piece they own now is the piece that the Jaycee park was on. Right next to, of course, Olde Towne.

DR. PATTERSON But I thought across from the old Wilson Creek bridge that that whole area was owned by the Catholic church.

MR. MORTON: I wasn't aware of it. Now I'm not sure. Now, Fred

Conderman went out there and built his house in the forties and his was the first house out there. Then Fred Hughes had a house out there and ran a chinchilla farm on it. They're the only two people I knew that lived in that area.

DR. PATTERSON There was a great dispute about people using the roadway through my mother's property to get to the bridge to get to the other property. I remember Judge Nunn acted as my mother's lawyer in this dispute which was settled in court in Kinston and she lost.

MR. MORTON: Did she? Romulus Armistead Nunn.

DR. PATTERSON Yes.

MR. MORTON: That's him. You remember the houses on the bridges?

DR. PATTERSON Tell me about them.

MR. MORTON: Both of the bridges of course were wooden structures.

DR. PATTERSON Now, these are the old bridges at the foot of Johnson Street across the Neuse River and at the foot of George Street across the Trent?

MR. MORTON: Yes. They were all totally wooden structures except for the draws. Close to the draw on both of the bridges there was a five room framed residence for the bridge keeper and his family.

I just thought it was very interesting. My mother was talking to Mrs. Odie Everington who was the bridge tender of the Neuse River bridge and she was saying, "Mrs. Everington, aren't you afraid to have those seven children living just where they might drop in the river any time?"

And she said, "Well, no Mrs. Morton. I'm a whole lot more worried about them when they're in New Bern that they might get run over by

a car."

DR. PATTERSON How did they handle sewage in those houses?

MR. MORTON: They dumped it in the river just like we did. You remember right there where you grew up the sewer pipes just dumped raw sewage right there.

DR. PATTERSON Many times I've walked out on that pipe when the tide was low.

MR. MORTON: Oh, I know it. Another thing interesting in downtown New Bern. You remember there were a lot of little soda shops around. There was the Sugar Bowl and there was Davis Delicatessen and there was Jacob's Soda Shop and Floyd Gaskins.

DR. PATTERSON Could you just backtrack a little bit and tell me where they were?

MR. MORTON: Okay. Well, Davis Delicatessen at that time was in the building where Williams Cafe is now. The Sugar Bowl was along about where Baxter's Sporting Goods is now. And of course Floyd Gaskins was where Dixon's Soda Shop is now. Jacobs was where Hearne's Jewelers is now.

DR. PATTERSON Where Mr. Bradham had his Pepsi Cola.

MR. MORTON: Exactly. But they were all over town. Then they had the little cafes further down, but the soda shops were the ones that I was talking about because they had curb service.

DR. PATTERSON Now where was this? This soda shop.

MR. MORTON: These soda shops. All of them had curb service. So, you'd drive up. There was no problem getting a parking place

cause there was diagonal parking. You'd toot your horn and out would come a waitress or car hop and take your order and bring it back to you and you might leave her a nickel. Might. But somewhere back in the thirties the board of aldermen got together and decided to ban curb service so they passed an ordinance prohibiting curb service at any of these places. And that was the end of that.

DR. PATTERSON Jack, you're not thinking of Davis Pharmacy are you?

MR. MORTON: Davis Pharmacy and Davis Delicatessen were two different places.

DR. PATTERSON Well, Davis Pharmacy also had curb service, didn't they?

MR. MORTON: Yes, they did.

DR. PATTERSON On two corners there.

MR. MORTON: Yeah. The one in what we now call the Clark building, it was the Mohn building. That was Davis Pharmacy if I recall.

DR. PATTERSON That's right.

MR. MORTON: And Davis Delicatessen was in the Williams Cafe or the Chelsea building as we call it today. An interesting thing about the library, I'm doing an awful lot of skipping around, but when I was a boy and it was on Middle Street, the John Wright Stanly House, there was a public library on the first floor but on the second floor was a rooming house.

DR. PATTERSON Now was this when the John Wright Stanly House was where the post office is? The big building, the federal building.

MR. MORTON: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON That was a library before it was turned around on New Street?

MR. MORTON: It was a library before it was turned around on New Street. It sure was. And it was a library then after they turned it.

DR. PATTERSON But folks lived upstairs?

MR. MORTON: Folks lived upstairs. I knew lots of people that had rooms up there. It was even odd back then. But the downstairs was all public library. We had a scandal in the elections back in the late thirties. I won't mention any of the names involved. But it seemed like one of the candidates had had an extra set of ballot boxes constructed. And you remember this I'm sure. What he did is when the balloting was over, he went out and collected all the ballot boxes and carried them to the board of elections and switched them in the meantime. It was a dreadful scandal. Except for the grace of God, he'd of gone to prison. The school bus system was another thing that I always wondered about. We didn't call them school buses back then. We called them school trucks because that's what they were if you recall. They had little wooden buildings built on them with gable roofs. I lived almost a mile from school and I wasn't allowed to ride the school bus because I lived in the city limit. And yet people that lived way, way closer on Trent Road could ride it because they were out of the city limit.

DR. PATTERSON This was to the high school?

MR. MORTON: To either one of them. To Ghent school or downtown. So I had to walk to Ghent school and I had to get whichever way I could to Central school. I rode my bicycle then because by then I was old enough to ride a bicycle. We rode everywhere on bicycles. My mother owned the license plate office, or she ran it, down on Tryon Palace Drive out of our garage. That's where I first met my first state highway patrolman. They were a dashing debonair bunch. Now if you remember, they came here about 1932. Several of the originals were J. K. Clay and B. G. Hines and that group. They all came in riding outfits with the boots and the jodhpurs and the goggles and the police-type hats, the whole works, riding Indian motorcycles. They hung around down there to guard the money because back then the state would not allow you to take anything but cash for license plates. No checks. I don't care if you were Sam Jones, and Sam Jones bought lots of license plates. He had to buy them in cash. It amounted up to a great deal of money. So during the rush season, they'd keep one down there all the time. It's interesting because one night after they had escorted my father home, the safe crackers went in there with nitroglycerin and blew our safe all to pieces. Of course they found nothing because my father had it under his bed. I remember it was an awful lot of money. It was twenty thousand dollars which would be equal to a million dollars today. It was a lot of money. That was in '33. But the night watchman who was asleep on the corner wasn't even awakened by the blast. They poured nitroglycerin through the cracks in the safe and then took kid's modeling clay and stopped all

the cracks up and ran a hot shot battery, ran a wire to it, and sat it off that way. But I even remember the man's name because they later got him. His name was Teak Procter and he was a master safe cracker.

Another interesting thing about New Bern. In my childhood was Fort Totten. Now this was back in the early thirties and we played on Fort Totten because it was still standing right between Trent Blvd. and Neuse Blvd. It was all in tact cause it hadn't been that long after the war. We used to go over there and pick up mini balls and trinkets and things that the soldiers had left. We could pick up a sand bucket full of mini balls in half an hour. There were that many lying around on the ground.

DR. PATTERSON What was it like? You said the building was still there.

MR. MORTON: It wasn't a building. It was breast works. It was two ridges of parapet in a more or less an oval shape and it went up and down. We rode our bicycles on the crest all the way around it. We thought it was great fun. We played over there a lot of the time. I think it somehow should have been preserved for sure because it was interesting and it took a lot of work to build it.

DR. PATTERSON You say this was not too long after the war.

MR. MORTON: Well, it was sixty years after the war. That's not very long when you think about it.

DR. PATTERSON It's surprising that there were so many artifacts still there.

MR. MORTON: Well, the people didn't attach any significance to

them. For instance, when I was a child, almost every family had a musket or two in the house. When I went into gun collecting back in the early fifties, I ran ads and I was inundated with them.

DR. PATTERSON What period were these muskets from?

MR. MORTON: They actually were from the late eighteenth century right on up to the Civil War.

DR. PATTERSON Where did they come from?

MR. MORTON: Well, one thing, they lasted so long except when they were actually in combat that they kept converting them to different systems of ignition. Some of them were used during the Revolutionary War. They would convert them from flint to percussion and it was just as good as any other musket. You couldn't hit anything with it deliberately anyhow cause most of them were smooth bore. I used to give two dollars and a half to five dollars for a musket and I got some very interesting ones.

DR. PATTERSON What happened to them all?

MR. MORTON: I sold them. I wrecked one of my airplanes one time and needed the money to repair it, so I sold a bunch of them to John Watson. You don't know who John Watson was, but that was Dr. Samuel P. Watson the EENT man's nephew who lived with him at that time. He's still got them today. He went and got a degree in engineering at State and then went with DuPont and retired from DuPont about ten years ago and is living in Moss Hill now. You remember Mr. Water's car?

DR. PATTERSON Well, I know something about it.

MR. MORTON: Well, Mr. Waters of course had his buggy works up

there where the Country Biscuit Shop is now. He had a lot of old cars. He'd been a buggy maker for years and years and years. In the last years of his life he really enjoyed this old horseless carriage. You've seen it in the museum in Raleigh. He would take drives and since Rhem Avenue was one of the nicest streets in New Bern at that time, he would always drive out to the end of Rhem Avenue and turn around and come back on Trent Road. Well, the car always had something wrong with it because it was kind of a Rube Goldberg contraption anyhow and it would break down and he didn't have anything way to start it. Cause the only way you could start it was by pushing it. So whenever we would see him broken down, we'd go up and we'd say, "Mr. Waters, if we help you push it, will you give us a ride?", and he would. When you think about it, it was a real ancient automobile.

DR. PATTERSON This was a car that he put together himself?

MR. MORTON: Exactly. It was an actual horseless carriage. It was built like a buggy and it looked like a buggy.

DR. PATTERSON Was this the first automobile in New Bern?

MR. MORTON: It was the first car that was ever built in New Bern. Now, I don't know if it was the first automobile or not. I imagine it was close to the first. There were a lot of strange automobiles that came to New Bern through the years though. One day Franklin Hammond called me and wanted to know if I could get him some information on a Great Western. I told him I didn't know, but I'd try. I said, "Well, why?" And he said, "Well, my father had a Great Western." Well, they must have not made many of them because of all the research that I

did, I never found but one reference to a Great Western. It was an enormous thing though. It was a tank. I remember Miss Georgia Oxley's car. It was a '23 Nash touring car and she always drove it with the top down. Probably because the top was rotten. That's the reason most people drove them with the top down. You remember when Al Williams came to New Bern about 1947? He was a big man in Gulf Oil Company and he used to come to see O. C. Crump who was a Gulf distributor.

He always flew in. He was an aviator of some renown. He was editor of an article in Flying magazine and he was a real aviation enthusiast.

Well, the Gulf Oil Company in 1947 had Gruman to build them a brand new Gulf Hawk. It was a great big radial engine by-plane with retractable gear. It was the state of the art and Al was proud of it. I remember him saying it cost a hundred thousand dollars to build.

A hundred thousand dollars in 1946 and '47 was a big, big pile of money. But he came to New Bern with it on his maiden voyage and he circled and he landed it. The most beautiful landing that you could behold except for one slight detail. He had forgotten to lower his landing gear. The airplane, which was the pride of civil aviation, burned to the ground and burned the crater in the runway and they had to shove it off the runway with a bulldozer, what was left of it. It was a tragedy. And him being an ace, Gulf Oil sent a DC-3 down to pick him up and carry him back to the home office.

DR. PATTERSON Do you remember Sam Ferebee who used to come in and fly in the Navy aquaplane?

MR. MORTON: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON He'd land out in the Neuse River. People would be crowded on the shores to watch this. They'd send a boat out and get him and bring him to shore.

MR. MORTON: I sure do remember it. I also remember when they used to bring that old seaplane, I believe it was a Waco, down to Maxwell's docks and sell rides on them. That was in the thirties.

I think a ride was two dollars and a half. It was a lot of money back then. It sure was. You remember the Big Apple?

DR. PATTERSON Yes.

MR. MORTON: That was quite an experience, wasn't it?

DR. PATTERSON Tell me about it.

MR. MORTON: Well, it was up there on Pollock Street. I won't mention the participants in it cause my cousin prosecuted the case.

They were purportedly lending money at just an enormous rate. But what they were doing, if you'd bring them a thousand dollars, they would pay you ten percent a week interest on it and you could get your money back any time you wanted it. Now I said ten percent a week.

They were taking in money so fast that they were hauling it to their cars in bushel baskets. It was that much money. And it was growing and it was catching on and of course anybody knows that you can't do it. But one person I know of and I knew him very well, had five thousand dollars in it and he decided that it was going to fail. He went down there to get his money and they popped five thousand dollars on the counter. He thought about it and he said no, you keep it. And the thing went up in smoke the very next week. (laughter) So, he lost.

But it was a greedy thing. They indicted them on obtaining money by false pretenses and both of the principals did pull time. It was the talk of the town for pretty near a year. It was a big thing.

DR. PATTERSON When was this Jack?

MR. MORTON: In 1948. I'm pretty sure of that. It was either '47 or '48, but I believe it was '48.

DR. PATTERSON I was gone then.

MR. MORTON: I saw one time, Joe Pat, something that I've never seen before in my life. I saw a group of citizens in New Bern try to storm the jail and lynch a prisoner. This was as late as about 1946. I won't mention any names here. But a man had taken a little girl and raped her and did a lot of unmentionable things to her, but he didn't kill her. It outraged every soul in this town! I actually saw a mob at the jail and Sheriff Lane, you remember Bob Lane, Bob Lane at the front door of the jail saying, "You're not going to have him." He was tried and convicted and he got 133 year sentence and believe it or not he got out about twenty years ago. I just thought that was interesting. The thing that was so interesting to me about it, Joe Pat, was the complete loss of reason by crowd. They had been whipped up and it was frightening. If there hadn't have been somebody that commanded the respect that Sheriff Lane commanded, they'd have gone in and gotten him, and that would have been a travesty of justice too. But I remember it quite well. Let's see now. When I was in the sixth grade in Miss Eleanor Marshall's class, and I know you remember Miss Eleanor Marshall, we had a boy in there named Harry

Brinson who used to sit in the back seat and chew tobacco and spit out the window. Well, Miss Eleanor was quite a lady. She was a very cultured, well educated person. When he would get so unruly that she couldn't handle him, she would send him over to the power plant where his father worked. Over at the old steam power plant right across the street from Eleanor Marshall School, which it is now. He'd take his razor strap and literally beat the hell out of him and then he'd send him back to school to sit in Miss Eleanor's class. That happened on many occasions. There's no historical significance of that, but that's the way it was. (laughter) I remember when Dr. Hand's place was down at the foot of Neuse River bridge.

DR. PATTERSON Neuse River bridge.

MR. MORTON: I mean Neuse River bridge. I told you I was getting soft in the head. Somebody gave him an old sharpie, an old oyster boat. It needed repairing and we started repairing it. That was the boat that I learned to sail on. It was an old 23 foot, gaff rigged, oyster boat. We sailed it. We white-washed the sails every month. But it was fun.

DR. PATTERSON Who would be with you on those trips?

MR. MORTON: Sandy Hoff, Bill Eden, maybe Paul Mengel.

DR. PATTERSON Billy Hand?

MR. MORTON: No. Billy was a little older than we were. I didn't get to know Billy until after the war. He was in dental school at that time. But these other folks I remember. There were a lot of them; Billy Fitzgerald and people like that. We all became good

swimmers and we all became pretty darn good sailors. We used to go down the river at night and every time we ever did it we'd get becalmed about down at Flanner's Beach and then we'd catch the devil in the morning when we'd got home. Our parents didn't know where we were or didn't know what had happened to us. I've been through the same thing with mine and you have with yours. It was quite a nice experience.

We named the boat for Dr. Hand by what his nieces called him and that was Willie. So the name of it was the Willie. Talking about the Depression. Mr. H. W. Barbour that ran Barbour Boat Works, things were so tight that he used to pay fifty cents a week on his repair bill. That's tough. Another little old tale that I happen to know is true, you know Mr. Goldman who was right next door to us in the junkyard was a Rabbi. As a result, he was also a shekhar, I don't know how to pronounce it in the Yiddish way, which means killer and he had to kill all the chickens that the kosher families ate around here. There was a place down on Middle Street called Bowden's that sold chickens. So what he'd do, he'd have Benjamin Lipman for delivery boy. He'd give Benjamin the chicken and a dime and Benjamin would take it over to Mr. Goldman who would put on his hat and get out his gold shekhar knife and he'd slit the chicken's throat. Well, Benjamin thought that wasn't quite right and he was gonna cut out the middle man. So, he got him a butcher knife. Mr. Bowden would give him the dime and he'd put it in his pocket and he'd go cut the chicken's throat and carry it to the family that bought it. (laughter) I've always thought that was funny. I was telling Billy Taylor when she was over

here about the doctor that lived on National Avenue. I won't mention his name. He had an arrangement with a good friend of mine to this day who was a moonshiner on the Bridgeton side of the river. This person would carry the good doctor his supply of whiskey and put it in the basement for him and take the cost, they kept a ledger, and he'd take it out in medical services. I thought it was most interesting.

I reminisced fairly lately with Billy and this other person about that. But it was fun. You know something? I am almost out of subjects.

Fred said something about maybe mentioning amateur radio. I don't know if anybody would be interested in that. Many years ago I got interested in amateur radio and became licensed. By the way, that's a pretty rough exam. I got on the air and over the last thirty odd years I've enjoyed it a great deal. I'm not interested in it except for who I meet on the air. I've met people from almost every country in the world on all continents.

DR. PATTERSON Could you converse with them?

MR. MORTON: Yes. My specialty was always what is known as CW, but it's really telegraphy. I enjoyed telegraphy more than anything else. That transcends the language barrier for several reasons. One thing, there's no idiom involved. There is an enormous conglomeration of international abbreviations that mean the same thing in every language. For instance, if you used the term "de" or "dotta dit dit," that is "from." That is the whole word "from" in any language. "YL" means an unmarried lady or young lady. An "x-yl" means a married lady.

There's literally thousands of these abbreviations which we use and

it keeps us from having any problem with the language barrier. I'll tell you a little story about one man that I operated and contacted.

He was a Polish young fellow. His name was Henrick. He and I operated on CW for quite a number of years. One time, his parents got transferred to London to work in the Polish foreign office and he went with them.

By being in London he got access to a phone station, or voice station, over at the Radio Society of Great Britain which I was a member of at that time in London. Anyhow, we set up a schedule and we were going to contact each other. Cause they had wonderful equipment and I had wonderful equipment. Joe Pat, we got on the air and we could not understand one word each other said. Not one. It was just as if I was talking to nothing. There was nothing understandable that he said.

He could write beautiful language, but he couldn't speak it and I couldn't understand it. But I thought it was very interesting. Another interesting thing that might be of interest to somebody. He was also quite a con fellow and a scam operator. He asked me if he sent me some money would I send him some Maybelline cosmetics. I said, "Sure.

How are you going to get me some money?" He said, "Well, I got some stamps that a friend in Sweden wants and I'm gonna send them to him and the friend in Sweden will send you a hundred dollars." Actually, he sent me a hundred and ten dollars. So then I went and bought the products that he wanted wholesale. He said send them to my friend in Zurich. So, I sent the Maybelline to the friend in Zurich who in turn had it smuggled to my friend in Warsaw and he started selling them. He was making out like a bandit when they caught him and put

him in prison. It was an interesting story. And every now and then I still hear from him.

DR. PATTERSON Are you still involved in this?

MR. MORTON: On a very small scale. I have a little ten meter rig upstairs which is very seasonal. It doesn't work all the time because of the propagation, and we're in the decline of the sun spot cycle and it only operates when we have a lot of solar activity. So, it would die out about next year and then I'll be off the air for about five years.

DR. PATTERSON Jack, your list is running out. Let me start asking you about some things.

MR. MORTON: Sure.

DR. PATTERSON Tell me what you remember about restaurants in New Bern.

MR. MORTON: Oh, I remember a lot about restaurants in New Bern. I remember that the restaurants generally ran in quality at the top of the list from about Broad Street and as you got close to the Trent River they got less good. (laughter) Do you have any specific ones?

DR. PATTERSON No. I just would like to know where you remember them being located and the names of them.

MR. MORTON: Okay. The one that I'll mention first was Mrs. Waldrop's Green Door Tea Room, which was right where that lot is across from the Chelsea on the southeast corner of Middle and Broad. It was in an old house and it was called The Green Door.

DR. PATTERSON As I recall that was right on the corner and you

could enter from either side of the corner to get inside.

MR. MORTON: That's exactly the way it was. The door was on the corner.

DR. PATTERSON That's right. Before we leave The Green Door, let me just ask some more about that. Mrs. Waldrop ran this?

MR. MORTON: Yes.

DR. PATTERSON Who worked with her?

MR. MORTON: Mrs. Williams who lived in the house next door to her.

DR. PATTERSON Is this Amy and Betsy Williams mother?

MR. MORTON: No, it was Billy and Tommy Williams mother. Anyhow, it was Mrs. Williams.

DR. PATTERSON Now, the Green Door moved from that location to across the street from the Athens Theater and behind the house where Dr. Latham had his office. There was a little building back there. Do you remember that?

MR. MORTON: Yeah, but I don't remember it moving. I didn't remember the Green Door moving.

DR. PATTERSON This was never associated with the Episcopal church.

MR. MORTON: No.

DR. PATTERSON Always Mrs. Waldrop's.

MR. MORTON: Always Mrs. Waldrop's. Probably one of the nicest restaurants in New Bern, and it doesn't go back into the early thirties like some of these other things do, in fact, Mrs. Waldrop's was in

the late forties and early fifties, but it was in the Queen Anne Hotel.

It was interesting that the hotel itself was a right elegant hotel.

DR. PATTERSON This was Vernon Blades home.

MR. MORTON: Residence. That's right.

DR. PATTERSON And it was where the First Citizens is now located?

MR. MORTON: Umhuh. The restaurant in that hotel was owned by a black man and his name was Harkless Wooten. He ran a first class restaurant. He did all the cooking himself. He did all the serving of the plates himself. It was the best food that I have ever consistently got in New Bern and it was reasonable. He was also involved as the chef at one time and then the other of the Coral Bay Club at Atlantic Beach. I'll go down Broad Street. There was the Blue Goose down next to the whiskey store.

DR. PATTERSON Where was that?

MR. MORTON: It was the second building from the corner of Hancock and Broad. It was run by Dennis Paaffe.

DR. PATTERSON Now, this was on Broad Street.

MR. MORTON: Yeah, on Broad Street. Then there was Lige Daniels Cafe which was called The Dinner Bell coming up the same side of the street.

DR. PATTERSON Broad Street?

MR. MORTON: Yeah. Umhuh. It was The Dinner Bell.

DR. PATTERSON That was between Hancock Street and Middle Street?

MR. MORTON: Yes. Umhuh. Then across the street from there was Mrs. Cavanaugh's Oil Well Cafe which was later taken over by her

son-in-law who was Raphael Armadeo. At The Oil Well, she had a big coffee cup sign. Then Raphael Armadeo opened up an Italian restaurant on Broad Street right over here about where Sumrell, Sugg, and Carmichael are now.

DR. PATTERSON The Oil Well is where the Mills Television is located.

MR. MORTON: Yeah. That was Mrs. Cavanaugh. That does away with Broad Street. Fred Lockey ran a cafe in the same building that The Blue Goose was in later, but The Blue Goose was there until Fred got there at about 1952 and then Fred operated it until he quit and went to South Carolina. Then on Middle Street there was of course Williams Cafe which Jimmy Baches ran. At the beginning of the war he got his nephew Tommy Leris to come and run it or to help him run it and he eventually gave it to Tommy. Tommy sent off for him for a wife from back in Athens and they married and they ran it together for a long time. Mrs. Leris never got much of a command of the King's english.

The only restaurant that I can recall right now on that block of Middle Street other than what is now The Chelsea, there was when Nathan Frank ran his Sugar Bowl which was really a drive-in type of thing or soda shop.

DR. PATTERSON Tell me again where that was located.

MR. MORTON: About where Baxter's Sporting Goods is now. Then going down to Pollock Street. Central Cafe was in the building next to Branch Bank's old building on Pollock Street. Of course there was the Metropolitan Club where the Chinese restaurant is now. But that

was mostly sandwiches. It wasn't a full service restaurant. At one time there was a restaurant in the building that Frank Dunn now owns. I believe Mrs. Jones owned it to begin with.

DR. PATTERSON On the corner of Craven and Pollock.

MR. MORTON: Yes. It had one of those corner entrances in it I recall very well. And then of course Mike's place was down next to the Sun Journal just a couple of doors down. That's where Mike Shapou really spent most of his career in downtown New Bern.

DR. PATTERSON Now, let's see Jack. Where the Sun Journal office is located now?

MR. MORTON: No, where the old Sun Journal office was.

DR. PATTERSON That was on Pollock Street.

MR. MORTON: Umhuh. On the southside of Pollock Street.

DR. PATTERSON What's there now in that location?

MR. MORTON: I think Branch's is in one part of it. Either that or some of those little stores along in there. But then eventually he moved around to the building on Craven Street right around the corner.

DR. PATTERSON Where Claire...

MR. MORTON: Yeah, where Fred and Claire's restaurant is now. In fact, his son-in-law, Mike Shapou's son-in-law, John Zaytoun, took it over when Mike got so he couldn't work anymore and he operated it.

DR. PATTERSON My friend Billy Caroon used to work there and flipped hamburgers.

MR. MORTON: Oh boy! You know I've said it before, but when I

was going to school, you could get two hotdogs and a pepsi cola for a dime. Both of them. I remember Agnes used to work behind that counter and she had an ice-cream scoop that she measured out the hamburger mixture. I call it a mixture because it had a lot of bread and stuff in it. She'd scoop it out and then she'd lay a spatula down on it and hit it with a vertical fashion. So, the hamburger only came out about that thick. But they put all that wonderful chili stuff on it and it still was good. He sold millions of them. I don't recall any restaurants on Craven Street except that during the war they opened the Club Diamond. I've even forgotten exactly where it was. It was more or less a nightclub type restaurant. On Middle Street there were a number of Lebanese restaurants that started just passed the O Marks building on that side of the street and ran toward the river. There was Albert's Cafe. There was Louie's Cafe. There was old man T. J. McSorley's little soda shop and there was John Nassef's Cafe on the corner. So that was five right there in a row. Then across the street and down Middle Street toward the river, there was a place called Margaret's Cafe. It was not a very savory place to say the least.

It was pretty rough. The closer you got toward the river the rougher things got. The Gaston Hotel had a pretty decent restaurant in it from time to time depending on who was running it. Actually, the best restaurant they ever had though was when Louis Howard took the thing over. It was a pretty darn good restaurant. I don't recall any cafes at that time on South Front Street except Charlie Simon's mother, Alda Braxton. She ran a first class restaurant in one of those houses on

the northside of South Front Street.

DR. PATTERSON The house is gone now. It's a vacant lot there. I can't recall the name of that. Charles Manor.

MR. MORTON: Charles Manor. That was it. It was named after her husband or Charles her son. Yeah, Charles Manor. Served good food.

DR. PATTERSON Jack, do you remember the Hotel New Bernian?

MR. MORTON: Sure. Oh yeah. I forgot that one. When Gillikin ran it, he and Carrie...

DR. PATTERSON Ben Gillikin?

MR. MORTON: No, it wasn't Ben. His wife was Carrie and they eventually bought the old Earl of Craven Lodge. He's the one that got hurt so bad in a car accident up here on Broad Street. He was walking and got hit by a car and became a paraplegic. I can't remember his first name, but anyhow, they ran a good restaurant in the old New Bernian Hotel.

DR. PATTERSON You know that hotel used to be called the Hotel Albert?

MR. MORTON: Yeah. Oh yeah.

DR. PATTERSON You know why?

MR. MORTON: No.

DR. PATTERSON It was built by my great grandfather Moses Patterson and my grandfather Albert Patterson, his son. And they named the hotel after my grandfather, The Hotel Albert.

MR. MORTON: I didn't know that Albert Patterson was in your

family.

DR. PATTERSON Yes. My grandfather. Do you remember that hotel as a hotel?

MR. MORTON: Oh yes.

DR. PATTERSON What was it like?

MR. MORTON: For its time, it was pretty good. If I recall correctly it was a walk-up hotel. The elevator had long since gone out of usage so you had to walk up. I went in it as little as about eight or nine years ago and I was appalled at how bad it had gotten.

I had never remembered it as having been anything but a fairly good hotel. I had used it for different sales reps and things like that for years.

DR. PATTERSON Now, that building is on the east side of Middle Street. In the first floor area, Billy Benners has his photo shop and another business. The facade is still there. You can tell where the hotel was.

MR. MORTON: Oh yeah, you can see that dome looking facade and that's where you can tell where it is.

DR. PATTERSON What was the Gaston Hotel like?

MR. MORTON: I can remember when it was very elegant back when Mr. Blades was running it. Then it became quite seedy when John Derickson took it over. I don't know how many years John Derickson operated it, but it was probably ten or fifteen years. Then when Louis Howard retook it over, with all of his showmanship, he made it look quite elegant. Louis Howard had a flair for making things look good

and he did. He had a good business there.

DR. PATTERSON That hotel burned down of course and it was a pretty terrible thing. I heard later, and I don't have any substantiation about this, that it was a fire deliberately set. Not by anyone we know, but by some young people who became angry at one of the people working in the building who wouldn't let them in and they got underneath this hotel and sprayed gasoline and set it on fire.

MR. MORTON: I've never heard that tale.

DR. PATTERSON I've only heard that from one person. There may be nothing to it.

MR. MORTON: Well, I would like to withhold any comments.

DR. PATTERSON Okay. Let's switch to something pretty different. What do you remember about relations between blacks and whites when you were growing up?

MR. MORTON: I always thought they were good. I had many black friends. But you got to remember that I was naive and I was also bigoted and didn't know it. I was raised that way. To maybe answer your question a little fuller, I felt the same then probably that I feel today. I've got many black friends and I don't have any problem with anybody because they're black. But I can't stand low class people of any race.

I just can't. I've got some really good black friends. There's a lot of them.

DR. PATTERSON When you were younger, did things go along pretty well between the races?

MR. MORTON: Sure. I had a little tale I was gonna tell you.

One of the worst feelings that I ever had involved a little black boy that was my age named Woodley. He lived across the road from us. He lived over on the J. S. Miller farm, which was all farm back then. There was nothing there but farm land. One day he asked me if he'd push me in my wagon would I give him a biscuit. Well, I went in and got a whole bag full of biscuits and he'd push me in the wagon and I'd feed him a biscuit. Well, when my mother found out about it, it just appalled her and she told me in no uncertain terms what she thought of it. I was only about seven or eight years old. But it taught me a lesson about somebody that was hungry enough to want to ask for a biscuit and then to take his services because he gave it to him. But we played with them. We played at their house and they played at our house. We called all black men "uncle" if they were respectable people and all black women that were respectable, "aunt". Always. We didn't ever make an exception in that.

DR. PATTERSON You were living in New Bern during the Civil Rights Act in the sixties and in the Martin Luther King tragedy.

MR. MORTON: Yes.

DR. PATTERSON What happened in New Bern during those times?

MR. MORTON: Joe Pat, it's embarrassing but it's an interesting story and I'll tell it if you want me to. It won't take long. There was a group of klansmen in the northern Craven County area that were really pretty tough people. Over the period of several days, they came to New Bern and they planted a bomb at Oscar's Mortuary and it blew a wall in. A friend of mine, or a customer of mine who recently

died this week, Carolina B. Chadwick from Pollocksville who was ninety-nine the other day when he died, they bombed his car which was a Rambler station wagon which I had sold him.

DR. PATTERSON He was black?

MR. MORTON: He was black. Yeah. In fact, Thelma Chadwick was married to his son who was named Carolina B. Chadwick, Jr. But anyhow, they did these dastardly things and they were caught. Due to the wisdom, the infinite wisdom, of the federal judge that tried them, it broke the back totally of all of this klan business in this area. What he did, he tried them, they were found guilty by jury, and he called them up there and he says, "I'm gonna fix this thing right now. I'm gonna give you five years of hard prison time each." There were three or four of them. But he said, "I'm gonna make it harder on you." I hope I'm saying this accurately. "I'm gonna suspend these sentences on the condition that for five or ten years", and I've forgotten what it was, "that you are not to be in each others company, to speak to each other on a telephone, to be in any building with each other, in any car with each other, or even on the streets with each other." And he said, "The second I hear of it, you're gonna go to prison and they're won't be any parole." Well sir, can you imagine a sentence like that? Now, it was much tougher than that, but I'm not an attorney. I remember it so well. And that was the end of it. It was gone. He made it perfectly clear to what was gonna happen and that was that.

DR. PATTERSON What are some other things that happened during that time?

MR. MORTON: We had a riot that was mostly contained up in Five Points area. It was an instigated thing.

DR. PATTERSON Instigated by whom?

MR. MORTON: I don't know. It was organized. I had a friend up there who ran a pool room. His name was Louis Simon. They threw bricks and just wrecked his business. And yet, he was okay. But things were pretty tense around here for about a week to ten days. It was the hardest on the decent blacks who were working in integrated offices and businesses and situations. It was bad on them.

DR. PATTERSON Are we talking about Martin Luther King time or just the general time?

MR. MORTON: I don't recall.

DR. PATTERSON Were there sit-ins in town?

MR. MORTON: No. It wasn't necessary. The only one that I remember was at John Moore's Barbecue. He used to serve them through a hole in the side of the wall. Some walked in there one day and he pulled out a shotgun and he ran them out. People tried their best to forget that because it ended up they became his best customers. They made him rich.

DR. PATTERSON How did the schools handle integration in New Bern?

MR. MORTON: Very well. There's no question that the integration was tough on the schools. It took a lot of getting used to as much scholastically as any other way. Some of the best administrators in the integrated school system were black.

DR. PATTERSON So it went pretty well.

MR. MORTON: It went pretty well, yeah.

DR. PATTERSON Okay. Well, let's shift to something else. Looking back at New Bern when you came along, what were the major economies in town? What kept this town going?

MR. MORTON: That's a hard one because things were so dead and nobody had any money. There were very few businesses that were thriving.

DR. PATTERSON Are you talking about the Depression?

MR. MORTON: Yeah, I'm talking about the Depression.

DR. PATTERSON I'm not limiting my question to the Depression. But just to the town of New Bern as you were growing up, what were the businesses that were important in town? What industries?

MR. MORTON: Well, we almost had no industry.

DR. PATTERSON Lumber mills?

MR. MORTON: The big lumber mills had long gone. They were closed up. They were rotting away. There was a lumber mill in Bridgeton, Bunting's Mill. They were shipping right much lumber. Roland was still in business. They were shipping some lumber. The people that worked in these mills were miserably paid even for the time. But at least they had a job. I do remember one thing. I remember that the WPA project, as much laughter as it got, it was still a good program and it gave people enough money to buy food. Of course, food was cheap. Real, real cheap.

DR. PATTERSON I was gonna ask you if you remember the CCC Camp?

MR. MORTON: Oh yes. Sure. I knew a lot of people that went

into the CCC's.

DR. PATTERSON How about the local camp?

MR. MORTON: Most of them didn't stay at the local camps.

DR. PATTERSON There was a local camp on the Morehead road though?

MR. MORTON: Yeah. There was a local camp on the Morehead road. But the biggest one was at Morehead City. There was another one up in I believe in Hyde County. But a lot of people went in the CCC's. It was a good program.

DR. PATTERSON Do you remember river traffic being important?

MR. MORTON: Very. Yes. The biggest activity you saw from my standpoint was the lumbering activity. For instance, they rafted the logs in and they sawed them and dried them and they carried them out on schooners.

DR. PATTERSON They rafted them in from where?

MR. MORTON: From all over. Any place there was any water close to where they were cutting. Because it was the cheapest way you could move a log. They would tie them together with chains. I've seen a raft a mile long being pulled by one boat.

DR. PATTERSON Going up the Neuse?

MR. MORTON: Going up the Neuse, yes. Usually there would be a lumberjack out on that darn raft with a cant hook and that was the most dangerous job in the whole world cause if he slipped, he was gone.

DR. PATTERSON Did they bring logs along the Trent River from Jones County?

MR. MORTON: No. I don't ever recall any. They all came up the

Neuse.

DR. PATTERSON Then once the lumber was sawed and handled, it was picked up by boats and taken everywhere?

MR. MORTON: Everywhere. Yeah. It was always a sailing vessel. Of course they were cheap to operate. But I don't ever recall any lumber being carried out of here on anything but sailing vessels.

DR. PATTERSON Where did they pick this up?

MR. MORTON: At the mills.

DR. PATTERSON Was there a mill in the 600 block of East Front Street where Edgerton Drive is now?

MR. MORTON: Yeah. That was Vernon Blades mill. There were the Blades and, what were their relatives names that lived in those two little houses next to the Blades? I can't remember their names to save my life.

DR. PATTERSON You're talking about the Blades living in that big gray house about 616?

MR. MORTON: 616 right. Then 618 and 620 are where the...

DR. PATTERSON Well, Hovey Aiken lives in one of them now and Joe Barker used to live in the other.

MR. MORTON: That's right. They're the ones.

DR. PATTERSON But Mr. Blades had a lumber mill back of there going down Edgerton Drive?

MR. MORTON: Umhuh.

DR. PATTERSON A big mill?

MR. MORTON: No. Not a big mill.

DR. PATTERSON Was there a granite quarry next to that?

MR. MORTON: No. That's where Mr. Edgerton himself had a monument works.

DR. PATTERSON That's what I mean. I don't mean a granite quarry, but a monument works.

MR. MORTON: I knew Mr. Edgerton because I sold him a car and he sued me. I sold him a '48 Packard. He bent the door in it and he went in to get it fix and the bodyman said well, this door has already been repaired. So, he raised hell about it. Of course, at the factory they get dents and they repair them just like they do here. But we'd never touched the car. It had come in on a freight carrier. But he still sued us and we paid him and that was the end of it.

DR. PATTERSON Now, he made tombstones at this place?

MR. MORTON: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON That's where the name Edgerton Drive comes from.

MR. MORTON: That's exactly where it comes from.

DR. PATTERSON Was there a railroad line along that road, Edgerton Drive?

MR. MORTON: Not in my time. But you got to remember that every lumber mill in New Bern had a rail spur going to it. In fact if you'll go look at the Sanborn maps of about 1904 or 1908, you can see that Riverside doesn't even resemble what it looks like now there was so much railroading. There were several hundred miles of track between here and the end of Glenburnnie Road I'm sure. Everything was rail.

DR. PATTERSON What was Ghent like?

MR. MORTON: Ghent was the Trent Woods analogy to New Bern or to the period. It was developed by Mr. McCarthy. He named the streets. The name of the company that owned it and just recently divested itself of all of it was the Ghent Land Company. It's owned now by a fellow by the name of Claude Sitidine in Richmond, Virginia. But it was a very nice neighborhood to grow up in.

DR. PATTERSON Large neighborhood?

MR. MORTON: Yes, it was a large neighborhood. Well, it went from First Street to Seventh Street and from Trent Road to the railroad tracks. All of it was developed from about 1920 to about 1928. It was considered a very nice place to live. It had a good school that was built for the purpose. It had modern utilities. It had gas.

DR. PATTERSON It had trolley cars.

MR. MORTON: That was the wonderful thing about it and that's what made it grow so fast and so well. It had all modern utilities that were already there and it had paved streets, the main streets.

DR. PATTERSON What do you remember about the trolley cars?

MR. MORTON: Not much. I remember riding on them but I was a little fellow. I remember them well. The most I remember about them is when we were kids we would play on them because they stayed there until the war. We'd pick nickels up. We'd find nickels every time we'd go down there.

DR. PATTERSON You remember any ferries across the rivers?

MR. MORTON: Oh yeah.

DR. PATTERSON What do you recall about them? Where were them?

MR. MORTON: Well, of course, the last one to be shut down was Street's Ferry. There was one at Snead's Ferry. All of these were state owned ferries and state maintained and state operated. Most of them would carry from one to two cars. I used to could rattle off every one of them right now because I used to get my daddy to drive where they were.

DR. PATTERSON Were there any along the Neuse, the Trent River in New Bern that you remember?

MR. MORTON: No.

DR. PATTERSON These are long gone.

MR. MORTON: They've long gone. Of course there was a passenger ferry that was privately operated from Minnesott Beach to Havelock operated by Kelly Watson. It ran for years.

DR. PATTERSON What do you remember about the early days of the airport?

MR. MORTON: The airport has always interested me. My first real knowledge of it being there was the day Lt. Nott got killed. That was really the dedication of the airport. That was the beginning of the airport. I remember what was going on at the airport continually from that time on.

DR. PATTERSON National Airlines used to come in.

MR. MORTON: Okay, you got me started now. In 1946 when I came out of the Army, I went to the employment office and there was a man looking for somebody to help him put the navigation and meteorological equipment in out there and he hired me. So I helped install the rotating

beacon, the ceiling light, the anemometer, all the equipment that was at the original airport in 1946. It was at that time that Queen City Airways was operating five passenger Cessna's out of there. They were called the Bamboo Bombers. They were surplus and they could carry four passengers. One in the co-pilot seat and three in the back. Shortly after that, National came in here flying Lockheed Lode Stars, which were fourteen passengers with the twin tail with 1830 engines.

I flew in them a lot from 1947 until they quit because they went to Washington D.C., which I had to go two to three times a week. Piedmont came in here flying DC-3's about 1950, maybe '51. We have had some kind of air service here ever since. Some kind.

DR. PATTERSON National quit.

MR. MORTON: Yeah, National quit. I don't see how they made any money flying those things anyhow. They were too expensive to operate. They were fast but they wouldn't hold a lot of people.

DR. PATTERSON During the war, the airport was taken over by the military.

MR. MORTON: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON Named Camp Mitchell, is that correct?

MR. MORTON: It was actually named Mitchell Field. It was renamed Mitchell Field. I saw where somebody alluded to Camp Mitchell. I never heard the term Camp Mitchell. But it was even replaced on the aeronautical charts as Mitchell Field.

DR. PATTERSON And that was taken over the by the Marine Corps?

MR. MORTON: Yeah. Umhuh. Many, many, many young Marine pilots

got killed at Mitchell Field. They used it for a carrier practice landing area. Of course, they were flying low and slow in those old Corsairs and the rate of attrition was just terrible. The reason I know so much about it is that Earl Smith who worked for us lived right across from Smaw Pollock Funeral Home. Earl lived there. Being as morbid as he was, he'd go over there when they'd bring the bodies in and help them get them ready to ship to the various homes and things like that. But it was pretty grim.

DR. PATTERSON Jack, when you look back and you look at medical care in New Bern when you grew up, in your early days, what do you remember about the doctors?

MR. MORTON: Well, I remember that nobody went to the hospital. You went to the doctor's office or his home or he came to you and took care of you. My opinion of doctors back in that time was very, very high, and then as I grew older, it started slipping. I don't mean doctors necessarily in general. I mean some doctors. I think I had a great deal of respect for the Sisters of St. Joseph's and the class hospital they ran with what they had to run it with.

DR. PATTERSON This was at St. Luke's?

MR. MORTON: Yeah, this was at St. Luke's. I think in general that we've always had pretty good medical care. But you know, we had some mighty, mighty fine physicians here Joe Pat. I mean that were dedicated to medicine. If they made a lot of money then that was all right too. But I don't think that during the period I was coming up, that there was a physician in New Bern that was in it for the money.

DR. PATTERSON I don't believe physicians then made a lot of money.

MR. MORTON: They didn't make a lot of money. They lived good, but as far as making a lot of money, they didn't. But they practiced the best grade of medicine that they thought they could do. I believe that.

DR. PATTERSON What hospitals do you remember?

MR. MORTON: I remember St. Luke's, Good Shepherd, and Kafer. I was in Kafer. I was never in St. Luke's as a patient. And of course I was never in Good Shepherd. But I thought that from the time Dr. Disosway took over Good Shepherd it was a pretty good hospital. Of course, I thought the world of Mr. Faison too. He was a nice person and he was a good citizen.

DR. PATTERSON He is being written up in the Sounds magazine.

MR. MORTON: I've read it now. It's out.

DR. PATTERSON Let me ask you Jack about disasters in New Bern. You don't remember the fire of 1922. That was a little before you were born.

MR. MORTON: Right.

DR. PATTERSON Tell me about hurricanes.

MR. MORTON: I remember the hurricanes very well. Of course, our place of business in 1933 was right in the middle of it. I didn't experience a lot first hand from the hurricane of '33, but the next day my father and mother took us all out and we went all over everywhere that we could get to. I remember, of course, the bridge washed away and I remember boats up on the courthouse lawn. I remember that vividly.

I remember the water standing in various places in New Bern that looked like the ocean. But I wasn't affected that much by it. I was in a good dry house and safe house. I remember the wind blowing a lot and I remember the power being off a long time and things like that, but I wasn't uncomfortable.

DR. PATTERSON The night of that storm my father and mother and I walked past your house right here on New Street in the water getting away from East Front Street and going up to my grandfather's house in the next block. Water was everywhere along here.

MR. MORTON: That was in '33.

DR. PATTERSON In '33.

MR. MORTON: Of course, I remember the one in '55 so well.

Dr. Patterson; Which one was that?

MR. MORTON: That was Ione. Because I was down at my place of business trying to get my stuff off the floor, my property off the floor, and I heard this enormous rush. I looked up and the water was coming in my building. It got waist deep within an hour. My car was ruined that night too. We lost fifteen new automobiles and countless used ones. It was bad.

DR. PATTERSON Were you insured?

MR. MORTON: We were insured for fourteen of the new cars and none of the used cars and one of the new cars wasn't insured. And of course none of the property and building was insured against rising water. You can't get that. But it was a pretty bad time. There again, I lived in a good tight house and it didn't affect me that much.

DR. PATTERSON Let me ask you Jack about your memories of the movie houses in New Bern.

MR. MORTON: Oh, I remember them all right. Of course we had the Kehoe and the Masonic and then there was a black theater up on Queen Street. I remember it cost a dime to get in. Popcorn was still a nickel, but you got a hell of a thing of popcorn for a nickel. A double feature on Saturday. We didn't go to the movies much though.

We didn't have the money to go to movies until, oh, it was getting close to World War II. We just didn't do that. You say, well, a dime to go to the movies. But if you've got to give three dimes to three children, that's thirty cents and fifteen cents for popcorn and forty-five, that's a half a buck. That's a man's days work back then.

DR. PATTERSON What was the Masonic Theater like?

MR. MORTON: We always thought it was a pretty elegant place. It changed. The format of the Masonic changed back in the early fifties. I've forgotten how it was before except that it seemed like a nice place and I was always thrilled to get to go there. I saw my first movie there. I even remember what it was.

DR. PATTERSON What?

MR. MORTON: "Tug Boat Annie".

DR. PATTERSON I saw the first talking picture I ever saw there.

MR. MORTON: Did you really?

DR. PATTERSON Yes. I can't remember the name of it, but I remember that. Now, the Kehoe Theater has had many names. It was named Athens Theater, the Kehoe, the Show Shop.

MR. MORTON: Show Shop before the Kehoe.

DR. PATTERSON Before the Kehoe. You remember the shows very well?

MR. MORTON: Sure. Oh yeah. We went to more movies in that one more than any other one. Then we had the Colonial Theater where Sam Branch is now. That's where I learned to operate a movie projector.

DR. PATTERSON I'm not sure I even remember that. There was a movie house there?

MR. MORTON: Umhuh. Yeah. It was opened by Loy Thompson from Castalia, North Carolina. He ran it. He opened it about 1939 I reckon and he operated it up until he committed suicide about 1950 I reckon, maybe a little later. His wife's name was Bleeka. Bleeka stayed in New Bern for years and years. Then she was Bleeka Pace.

DR. PATTERSON I was gone all those years. That's why I don't remember that.

MR. MORTON: I became a projectionist there. When I went in the Army, I was in the field one day and a man came up in a jeep, a lieutenant, and he said, "I want to see Private Morton." They dragged me out and I went over there to him. He said, "Morton, I understand you can operate a movie projector." That's all he said. I said, "What kind of machine, Sir." He said, "We've got the latest thing that's made, Simplex E7."

I said, "I've never operated one." He said, "But can you operate?"

I said, "Yes Sir." Right then he dragged me out of the field and I had to go run the movie mandatorily until they got a projectionist, and then they gave me a side job and paid me for it.

DR. PATTERSON You've done many things in your life.

MR. MORTON: That was interesting Joe Pat. They had six theaters on the post and they used one movie for all six theaters. They'd run it here, give it to a WAC in a jeep and she'd run it to number two, then they'd give it to a WAC in a jeep to number three. You'd have to thread that machine and get your lamps lit and everything in zero time.

DR. PATTERSON During World War II, was there a German prison of war camp in New Bern?

MR. MORTON: Umhuh.

DR. PATTERSON Where was that located?

MR. MORTON: Out at Glenburnnie.

DR. PATTERSON You recall any details about that?

MR. MORTON: No. They didn't have a lot of them here. See, I was gone too. I left here in '43 and I didn't come home until late in '46.

DR. PATTERSON Camp Battle?

MR. MORTON: Yes.

DR. PATTERSON That was the name of the...

MR. MORTON: Army camp. Camp Battle was where the sewage treatment plant is.

DR. PATTERSON Now, was that the prisoner of war camp?

MR. MORTON: The prisoner's camp was in that same area.

DR. PATTERSON Yes. Camp Battle itself, though, was that a location where training took place?

MR. MORTON: No. It was the first infantry regiment. In other words, part of the first infantry regiment came to guard the bridges and the railroad and railroad bridges and things like that against sabotage and espionage.

DR. PATTERSON And they stayed at Camp Battle?

MR. MORTON: They stayed at Camp Battle.

DR. PATTERSON Jack, we're winding down now. I want to ask you a broad general question just for your feelings about it. What do you think about the future of New Bern as you look back and see the way it was and the influx of new people and what's happening. What do you think is going to happen to New Bern?

MR. MORTON: Well, Joe Pat, let me preface that by saying I think the new people have done a great deal for New Bern. Or a lot of them have. I think they brought in different cultures, different arts, different professions. I think by and large New Bern has profited by all of these people from all these diverse backgrounds. I would like to see the growth of New Bern slowed down and become a little more orderly because we are getting to be a big city too fast and I don't want to be a big city. The traffic is getting horrendous. What I want to do is not to attract just people here. There's no reason to increase population density. All it does is breed problems of the big inner cities. The pollution of automobiles, the pollution of too many people, the pollution of trash and crowding of everything. Yes, I want to see New Bern progress but not necessarily grow too fast. I don't want it to lose its charm.

DR. PATTERSON You think it's gonna be all right?

MR. MORTON: In my life time, it'll be all right. But I worry about it for my children and grandchildren. I just want them to slow things down. It's happening too fast.

DR. PATTERSON You think the historic district where you live and where I live is going to remain like it is now pretty much?

MR. MORTON: Yes, I do. I don't think that the historic district as we know it can go down from purely economic reasons. People have invested too much money and it's gonna be many, many years before anything gets cheap in the historic district. And I'm glad of that.

DR. PATTERSON Well, Jack, this has been a great interview. This is surely one of the best interviews I've been involved in and you have just told us some wonderful things for other people in the future to know about and to round out our story about New Bern and I do thank you for letting me come and letting the Memories program get you involved like this.

MR. MORTON: Well, thank you Joe Pat. It's been a pleasure. I've enjoyed it as much as you have and I hope you'll cut out the drivel.
(laughter)

DR. PATTERSON There's been no drivel at all. Everything has been pertinent and good and like I said, it's just been great. So, I'm gonna cut this off now.

END OF INTERVIEW