

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

DR. WILLIAM LUTHER HAND, JR.

INTERVIEW 1002

This is Dr. Joseph Patterson, Jr. representing the New Bern Memories Committee. My number is 1000. I'm interviewing Dr. William Luther Hand, Jr., interview number 1002. This interview is being conducted on May 21, 1992 at Dr. Hand's office located at 2820 Neuse Blvd. in New Bern, North Carolina.

Dr. Patterson: Billy, I thank you for letting me come out here and talk to you. As I explained to you, what we want to do is get your memories of New Bern as it was when you and I were growing up.

To begin this, I want to just start with a history of you and your background a little bit to make a setting for this. So, tell me when you were born and where you were born.

Dr. Hand: The date of birth was April 23, 1919. I was born in the old hospital on Craven Street, two houses from the Hughes apartments, Mary Boylan's home at the time, before we had St. Luke's Hospital. Dr. Richard Duffy was the physician. I was the second child in the family.

Dr. Patterson: Billy, I don't think I knew that you had a sibling. Was this a sister or a brother?

Dr. Hand: It was a brother.

Dr. Patterson: What happened to that brother?

Dr. Hand: He died in infancy.

Dr. Patterson: I'm sorry to hear that. I didn't even know that. Your mother's name before she was married?

Dr. Hand: Ellis (Elizabeth).

Dr. Patterson: Where was she from?

Dr. Hand: New Bern.

Dr. Patterson: What Ellis family is that?

Dr. Hand: That was Elijah Ellis. He was a merchant here in New Bern. He was mayor at one time, and one of the old fire engines down there is named for him where they exhibit the old big ones.

Dr. Patterson: So, your mother is a New Bern person?

Dr. Hand: A New Bern person from way back.

Dr. Patterson: Your father was William Luther Hand. What is his background?

Dr. Hand: He came from a farming background in Burgaw. When he graduated from Maryland, he came to New Bern to start practice, courted mother, and they eventually became married.

Dr. Patterson: When you grew up, did you grow up in the house on the corner of Craven and Johnson Street where I knew you as a boy?

Dr. Hand: No. Dad and mother built the house that Anna Pleiser is living in now. I think it was usually called at that time, the Gaskins house, because Guy Gaskins, who was a sporting goods merchant here in New Bern, lived there for as long as anybody did. Then the house that you're speaking of, they built on the corner, and that was the house that I grew up in. But as an infant, it started at the Pleiser house.

Dr. Patterson: That's where Charles McCotter lived too, and it's the second house up from Muse McCotter going West.

Dr. Hand: It would be the third house up from the corner (of Craven and Johnson Streets) going East.

Dr. Patterson: Okay. We're just talking about different corners. You lived on that street in that house until you were a young man, I know.

Dr. Hand: Yes, until we moved into my grandmother's house.

Dr. Patterson: About what year was that?

Dr. Hand: That was thirty-one years ago.

Dr. Patterson: Now, that's the house you're living in now on the corner of East Front and Johnson Street?

Dr. Hand: That's correct.

Dr. Patterson: I didn't realize you'd been there that long, but I've been away for a long time too. You married Kathryn?

Dr. Hand: Kathryn Harris Jones.

Dr. Patterson: Now, what about Kathryn's background?

Dr. Hand: Kathryn's background, she was a Jones. Her father was a merchant in produce with his brother, Sam Jones, who was Sam Jones' Produce. He would go throughout the country and make the contracts and send them to his brother and then they would farm them out to the people up North and so forth. Kathryn's father would do the purchasing of the produce, and then have them sent to Sam at the warehouse or whatever, then he would transship them.

Dr. Patterson: Kathryn's father used to run trucks to Belle Glade, Florida to pick up produce, I think. We were down in Belle Glade a couple of times.

Dr. Hand: They were all involved in that. Sam's uncle started the hydroponics in Florida; cultivation by water fertilization. He

became quite prolific with it during the World War II because you could force these plants so much with it, and of course, they were in tremendous demand.

Dr. Patterson: What year were you and Kathryn married?

Dr. Hand: It's been thirty-three years ago.

Dr. Patterson: You have how many children?

Dr. Hand: We have three. The oldest daughter is Mary Kay, then the middle daughter is Beth, and then Bill, the son.

Dr. Patterson: Mary Kay and Priscilla (Patterson) were contemporaries and good friends. She's married and now living where?

Dr. Hand: In Baltimore.

Dr. Patterson: And Beth, where's Beth?

Dr. Hand: Beth is in Washington, D.C., Arlington really. She's working for the federal government.

Dr. Patterson: She is married?

Dr. Hand: No, she's unmarried. Mary Kay is married, and we have three grandchildren there.

Dr. Patterson: And Bill is here with you, and you have one grandchild here.

Dr. Hand: Right.

Dr. Patterson: Now, all your schooling days prior to college were spent in New Bern, is that right?

Dr. Hand: No. I graduated from New Bern High and went to Fishburne. From Fishburne to the University of North Carolina.

Dr. Patterson: How many years were you at Fishburne?

Dr. Hand: Just one year. I took one year of post graduate.

Dr. Patterson: Do you have any special memories about your years in school in New Bern, growing up and younger years?

Dr. Hand: Miss Molly Heath, I think, leaves an impression with everyone she's ever touched in her life. That particular teacher, and Mrs. H. B. Smith, that was Professor Smith the Superintendent, the individual that we all feared but respected, and she was a marvelous teacher. So, those two teachers stand out in my mind as much as any of them.

Dr. Patterson: Did you have a good time in those younger grades when you were growing up?

Dr. Hand: Not so much in the younger grades. I think the pleasures that came about in those younger years, came about with all the boys that we used to go fishing with, and playing football with, and baseball, and the activities of a small group of boys. They were the pleasant, real exceptional times of my life in high school.

Dr. Patterson: I'd like to zero in on that a little bit and talk about the things I remember playing with you. I remember playing in your backyard at your house, playing baseball and doing other things. Do you recall those days?

Dr. Hand: Yes. Dad loved children. He'd like to of had any number of children, so I think his second family were all these kids that would come around. He opened up the back yard and made it a playground for us. We had stables back there, and we had two or three ponies that I didn't own and my dad didn't own, but the other youngsters

could keep them there, and it was our job to feed them. We'd go out routinely and regularly to get big trailer loads of soybean hay for all of them. He taught us to care for the animals. I think our daily and weekend playground was in the back yard there because of the availability of space, the size of it. That was the nucleus of the Boy Scout Troop. That was where that started. A group of very young people. Dad thought that they needed a little more direction instead of just turning us loose to play. So, we started taking trips to various places. We would go to Norfolk, Virginia and go on the battleships there; and the air craft carriers, we'd go to Fort Bragg. We'd go to Wilmington when the Constitution would come in. We had requirements of writing these trips up or we didn't go on the next one. Different fathers would go in their automobiles and take us. That was the nucleus of eventually getting into Boy Scouts. This was all before scouting.

You know, today you got the Webelows, or the younger cubs and so forth, you didn't have those in those days.

You see, you had to wait until you were old enough to be a Boy Scout, and as soon as this nucleus group of boys were old enough to be Scouts, dad formed a Scout Troop.

Dr. Patterson: Was it before that time, that we used to play baseball in your backyard?

Dr. Hand: Yes.

Dr. Patterson: Who were some of the fellows that played back there?

Dr. Hand: Billy Dill, Ben Hurst, Johnny Mitchell, you-Joe Pat,

Elbert Lipman, Henry Whitehurst, Robert Whitehurst, Bobby Grantham, Teddy Shapou, Jimmy Smith, Jimmy Bryan, Billy Bryan, Grayson Waldrop, David Lawrence, Andy Fuller, and anyone that wanted to come.

Dr. Patterson: As I recall, the South Front Street boys used to come with a whole baseball team, and we'd form a team and play them.

Am I remembering that correctly?

Dr. Hand: Very informal basis - say, let's have a game this Saturday!

Dr. Patterson: We'd always hated for Johnny Mitchell and Andy Fuller to pitch because they threw such hard balls. (Laughter)

Dr. Hand: I remember Andy in particular. He was very tall and very talented.

Dr. Patterson: Didn't you have a cable slide?

Dr. Hand: Yes. There were pecan trees on the perimeter. Dad had a set of stairs made, I guess they would go up thirty feet up this pecan tree, and he had a cable, I would say it was an inch in diameter, a steel cable and it was wrapped around that tree. On that steel cable he had placed a trolley, like a pulley, and you would hang onto this and jump off of that thirty foot platform. The other end of it would be fastened down to the other end of the yard, and it was off the ground maybe about six feet. So, we'd have a big ride down there and jump off at the very end so we wouldn't crash into the boats. That lasted until we wore it out. I think one of the great attractions was, if they wanted to come in there and ride the ponies and ride the horses, they could do it. They could ride anywhere they wanted to. We had

a little two wheel sulky that we'd pack off behind them, and we'd go camping and run out to Glenburnie Park and take sandwiches with us. Very informally done until we got into the scouting and then it was pretty structured.

Dr. Patterson: The scouting and the Dr. Hand gang situation are very important things to talk about, but let's, for the moment, leave that and go on into dentistry and talk about that as our primary thing, then, I want to come back to this. After Fishburne, you went to the University of North Carolina and you spent four years there. As I recall, you were a freshman when I was a senior, and you were a fraternity man, you belonged to the DKE fraternity, and so did I. After you left Chapel Hill in 1943, what happened to you after that?

Dr. Hand: I went to The Medical College of Virginia into Dentistry. I finished that up and then went into service. We were taken into service while we were in school in Army specialized training program. Wore a uniform and so forth. Then after the service was over, I came back to New Bern and I went in with my father in practice.

At that time there were only; Dr. Civils and Dr. Parker and Dr. Johnson and my father, and Dr. Whitehead was here for a short period of time.

That was the dental community as I knew it when I first came to New Bern.

Dr. Patterson: You must of gone into service about 1947, before your dental school?

Dr. Hand: We went through in three years. We did not have any break in the summer at all. That was very nice that way.

Dr. Patterson: In 1946 then, or somewhere around there. Weren't there some other New Bern men up there in dental school with you at this time?

Dr. Hand: Yes! We had Bob Mohn, we had Roy Miller, and we had Charlie Barker, and we had Bill Hammond, and Billy Caroon. Bill Hammond was a little ahead of all of us, and Bill Caroon was a little behind us. That other group was right in there all pretty much in school at the same time.

Dr. Patterson: Did some of them come back to New Bern when you came back?

Dr. Hand: All of them came back except Bob Mohn and Billy Caroon.

Dr. Patterson: Billy Caroon stayed in Virginia as I remember it, but the rest of you came back and started practice.

Dr. Hand: Absolutely.

Dr. Patterson: At that time, there were four dentists in town?

Dr. Hand: Yes. Al Whitehead was here for a just a short while. That would have made five.

Dr. Patterson: Were these all white dentist?

Dr. Hand: We had two colored dentists in town. One was Dr. Bryan and another was a Haitian or Jamaican, and I've forgotten his name.

Dr. Patterson: That's Dr. Samuel Bryan who is here still, and he's living here. Interestingly, he was in the house that started the fire in New Bern. He was eating breakfast that morning. So, Dr. Bryan was here, the Haitian, and Dr. Zebulon Vance Parker, and who were the others?

Dr. Hand: Harvey Civils. He was part owner of the Holiday Inn. Then, Charlie Johnson and my father.

Dr. Patterson: Can you look back to those days, Billy, and describe what the practice of dentistry was like then; the equipment, the charges, whatever.

Dr. Hand: I think that the best description that I can give of the dental practice in those days, would say that it was just about as average as it could be in this state. There was nothing exceptional about it; educational wise, treatment wise. As far as the equipment is concerned, X-rays were perfected to a little bit better than they'd ever been before, but the basic change in equipment was just primarily mechanical. There were no great changes in equipment in those days til after 1950. After 1950, I think the complexion of the profession of this whole state changed tremendously, dramatically, due primarily to the University of North Carolina School of Dentistry. We had a very forward thinking Dean. That became such a prestigious school through our Dean's efforts, and those efforts stem basically from his idea that a state supported school could not afford superb salaries for teachers. He wanted to establish a top school in the United States and that means the world. So, he took a page from Duke University and established the intramural, or private practice idea within the school of dentistry; whereby, a professor, teacher, could double his salary. This meant that we could go out and buy, hire, attract, top teachers in the world. And he did, with the result that we had one of the top dental schools in the nation, and still have it. They

established a continuing education program that enabled us to go to Chapel Hill with all disciplines available to us, with the latest and so forth, and enabled this profession to really exceed the standard of care that had been in the past. Now, it's no reflection on the past, I'm just saying that we were very fortunate in having this center so close to us. You just wouldn't knock on the door without the door being opened to you for information or whatever help you needed, and it was marvelous, it was great! They stimulated the thought that dentist had never had. They just tapped on the minds so many times.

Dr. Patterson: That's a wonderful expression of appreciation and loyalty, and I'm with you on that. Tell me, what difference it made locally in the practice of dentistry.

Dr. Hand: Most of the dentists realized that in dentistry you're competing for patients. When you can offer services that were exceptional and what you had been taught, these other dentists would see that advantage and they would want to find out themselves so, off to Chapel Hill they would go. So, it was a buildery so to speak. I don't know of any dentists in this town that did not avail themselves of that opportunity. Consequently, they have broadened their base of education, they've broadened their techniques, they've broadened their services that they could give the citizens that they served.

I know it's elevated the standard of dentistry in North Carolina and we're just as much a part of it as anybody else. The dentists in New Bern have just as much interest in it as anyone else. Probably more

so because I think the appreciation for it was realized and we have a good group here.

Dr. Patterson: So, it wasn't the change in equipment, it was the change in educational opportunities led by the University of North Carolina that produced the changes in New Bern and everywhere else?

Dr. Hand: Absolutely. Equipment will evolve. There was one dentist, Dr. (Charles) Barker, here that devised a system of delivery of instrumentation and he patented it.

Dr. Patterson: That was Dr. Barker?

Dr. Hand: Yes. It was picked up by Pelton and Crane and that was successful. But you got to have education to use that equipment.

Dr. Patterson: I'm with you on that dental school. I was up there too, and I worked there some and I know. Let's go back and let me ask you this. When you came to New Bern to work with your father, was that an automatic thing, had you planned to do that all along?

Dr. Hand: It seemed absolutely automatic. Dad was a very individualistic person and our relationship was great. I enjoyed being there with him. We made our adjustments, we had to make them. I feel grateful for being able to come back into a practice that was going.

Dr. Patterson: When you came back, Billy, from the fine dental school in Richmond, the Medical College, into your father's office, did it surprise you, the instrumentation, the environment, or did you have any trouble with that?

Dr. Hand: I had trouble with the fact that where I'd come from their equipment was obsolete.

Dr. Patterson: In Richmond?

Dr. Hand: Yes. They needed the upgrading with equipment.

Dr. Patterson: Not locally?

Dr. Hand: Not locally, no. That evolved later. Chapel Hill started teaching four-handed dentistry. You've always done it for years in medicine. My goodness, you got six and eight hands helping you do your surgery, well, dentistry has been so far behind medicine that it's been pitiful in the way of auxiliary help.

Dr. Patterson: What do you mean by two-handed dentistry and four-handed dentistry?

Dr. Hand: Okay, two-handed dentistry is one dentist doing it all.

Dr. Patterson: Cleaning?

Dr. Hand: Absolutely. Four-handed dentistry; the dentist with two hands, the assistant with two doing suction, handing instruments and so forth, instrumentation.

Dr. Patterson: When you came back to New Bern, what was it, two-handed?

Dr. Hand: No, we had four-handed. Now, dad had two. That's all they were taught in those days. Stand up! We stood up in dental school, we didn't sit down. I could never of been practicing, none of us could of lasted as long as we did in the profession if we hadn't been able to sit down and work on our patients comfortably and efficiently.

Dr. Patterson: When did that change come about?

Dr. Hand: That change came about through Johnny Anderson out in Chicago who did time and motion studies standing up showing you that the motions that you would make as a two-handed dentist, the motions that you would make with a four-handed or even six-handed dentistry, and the time lapse. The time and motion just showed everybody of the wasted effort that dentist were making in treating their patients.

Dr. Patterson: Was that in the late Forties?

Dr. Hand: That was in the Fifties.

Dr. Patterson: That change came about while you were working with your father then.

Dr. Hand: It surely did. To show us how to do it. We were taught in schools to use an assistant if we could.

Dr. Patterson: Where was your father's and your office?

Dr. Hand: The Elk's building.

Dr. Patterson: What floor?

Dr. Hand: Third floor.

Dr. Patterson: Your daddy had been there for a long time?

Dr. Hand: Dad went in there when the building was built.

Dr. Patterson: 1909 or somewhere in there. Dr. Parker was in that building too for a while, wasn't he?

Dr. Hand: I wasn't familiar with that.

Dr. Patterson: Was your dad the only dentist there?

Dr. Hand: Charlie Johnson was on the second floor.

Dr. Patterson: You and your father stayed together until his

death?

Dr. Hand: Yes.

Dr. Patterson: What was the situation then in relation to hospital care of patients from a dental stand point? What did your father do and what did you do in that regard?

Dr. Hand: If they had a trauma case, they'd called whoever happened to be available and you'd do the best you could. Eventually, the Craven County Dental Society established an emergency rotational system where each of would be on call for a week. When they needed us, they would call us. It was primarily on a basis of need and who was available.

Dr. Patterson: When you had a patient in the hospital who needed dental care or dental surgery, was there any problem gaining hospital permission to do that? Were you on the staff or how did that work?

Dr. Hand: Yes. Not at St. Luke's or Kafer, but when the Craven Hospital was started, yes, we had to be part of the staff and apply for it. There was no problem in getting the facilities and using them.

The problem was it would take you as long to get your instrumentation sterilized to take them up to the hospital, get them sterilized, and then you'd have to wait for them to be sterilized again to get them back to your office. So, any procedure that we did in the hospital, it would take us twice as long really simply because of that problem.

Dr. Patterson: It'd take you out of your office for a long time?

Dr. Hand: Absolutely.

Dr. Patterson: Well, you were not then a staff member of St.

Luke's. That's sort of hard to define.

Dr. Hand. That's true. I was at Kafer, but not at St. Luke's.

Dr. Patterson: If you had a fractured mandible at St. Luke's, you would come in and fix it in the operating room?

Dr. Hand: Yes, we did some of them.

Dr. Patterson: As I recall, the physicians did the physical examinations. You worked very closely with the physicians.

Dr. Hand: Yes, absolutely.

Dr. Patterson: Billy, would it bother you to talk about your father's accident?

Dr. Hand: Not at all, not a bit. Dad always loved to work in the basement, and he had woodworking tools there and he had everything that you need to fix something. He had an extension cord, and you know how the hook is on the end of that extension cord that you could hook it around a nail or whatever and he had a wire and this extension cord with the hook on the top of it could be hooked into that wire and he could move it up and down his workbench. He always wore gloves when he was working. It was after one of the hurricanes and there was water in the basement. We had a pump but there'd been so much water that it just overtaxed that pump and the basement was still wet.

He reached up and touched this extension cord, and evidently part of the socket was bare, and he made contact, and being wet and so forth, it knocked him down of course and when he fell the cord went with him, and that is what did it for him. I always remember you coming to the house. I remember Jack Barefoot. I called the hospital and asked

somebody if they wouldn't come around and told them what happened.

Dr. Ashford came around with some adrenalin but it didn't do any good.

I remember your presence there and it meant a lot to me for you to be there. And that was it. The fire department responded well, they were there.

Dr. Patterson: He was just electrocuted, there was nothing to do.

Dr. Hand: Nothing to do.

Dr. Patterson: It was a sad time. That was about 1955 or somewhere around there. Did you continue to practice in the office in the Elk's Temple?

Dr. Hand: Yes, surely did. I practiced there until, I believe Reece Little got this group together over at the Medical Arts Center, I'm not sure. I think he and Suzanne owned that piece of property.

Then, I moved down to there for ten years and then moved in with this building.

Dr. Patterson: You were practicing alone during that time?

Dr. Hand: Practicing alone.

Dr. Patterson: What was the next step?

Dr. Hand: The next step was I went to the Medical Arts over there and Roy Taylor and myself went in as "tenants in common with a space" shall we say. He had his practice and I had mine. I did what I wanted to do. If I wanted to work one day a week, I did. If he wanted to work ten, that's good. So, that worked very fine, very nicely, until Bill came down, my son. Then, we put this together. So, I stayed

there about ten years.

Dr. Patterson: When did Bill come?

Dr. Hand: Bill was here really, eleven years ago.

Dr. Patterson: Over the years, there have been a lot of dentists coming into this community. In the Fifties when you and I were here together, who all was around?

Dr. Hand: Bill Hammond was here, Charlie Johnson was here, Harvey Civils was here, Dr. Barker, I think, had left by that time, and Charlie Barker, and Roy Miller in the Fifties. Then the influx started when The Chapel Hill School of Dentistry started graduating their personnel, which was after 1954. I think it's reflective on the School of Dentistry there in Chapel Hill that so many dentists we thought were coming to New Bern. We expanded much faster than Kinston or Morehead City or Beaufort or Washington.

Dr. Patterson: So the change came about in the mid fifties when the school started turning out these young people. Before that change occurred, looking back, would you say that the caliber of dentistry that was practiced here was pretty good?

Dr. Hand: It was average for the state, no question.

Dr. Patterson: Just like everybody else, it wasn't outstanding?

Dr. Hand: That's right.

Dr. Patterson: What about after that change?

Dr. Hand: Tremendous change and I think that Chapel Hill deserves all the credit for it.

Dr. Patterson: Well, I don't know of any better spokesman than

you for that Chapel Hill dental school. I think you're about as loyal as anybody.

Dr. Hand: It's been my professional home since they were there, and I've contributed to it and continue to.

Dr. Patterson: When you were here in your earlier years, there was very little reason to make house calls for dentists, but did you have to do that?

Dr. Hand: Yes, I made house calls.

Dr. Patterson: What would you do on a house call?

Dr. Hand: Diagnose the problem, you know, too sick to move or whatever, look and do the best you could. Not much dentistry you could do for them. You could prescribe. Very seldom did you want to do any surgery with them, but we didn't hesitate to make a house call.

Dr. Patterson: You don't do that now?

Dr. Hand: Gosh, I haven't made a house call in years.

Dr. Patterson: I used to make them too when I was here. Billy, looking back, are you glad that you went into Dentistry?

Dr. Hand: Yes, I am. It has given me a life that I don't think I could of had otherwise. By that I mean, it afforded me things to do with my life. It has made it possible for me to do things in my life that perhaps I would not have done otherwise; to travel. When we were doing courses, we wouldn't hesitate to go to the West coast.

We wouldn't hesitate to go anywhere if the course was presented and it had a top notch person. We found out later that it was more economical to bring them to us. We'd just get a group together. This is where

these study clubs came in to being. You'd get ten or fifteen people to split the cost of the commission and bring him to you, and we didn't have to go flying off to meet him. They have been a big help in continuing education. That goes back to Chapel Hill, it's one of their concepts.

Dr. Patterson: You're glad you went into dentistry.

Dr. Hand: I am just tickled to death.

Dr. Patterson: It's been a fun, satisfying life for you, hasn't it?

Dr. Hand: Absolutely, it certainly has. I don't think I ought to urge my grandson to go into dentistry now.

Dr. Patterson: Why?

Dr. Hand: I think we're not getting the controls that your profession has had, that medicine has had, but they are coming, they are coming. OSHA is giving us a lot of problems. We feel that the fines that they have fined members of the profession are exorbitant; \$10,000 for a violation. We, right now, our Society of American Dental Association, they are trying to get those guidelines pretty well solidified. Instead of taking industry and their guidelines and applying them to the dental office. So, what the future will hold as far as insurance is concerned, and what control the clerical people and insurance have over your practice is getting more and more. It's frustrating to work out a treatment plan and to have them to say no, don't approve it.

Dr. Patterson: Thinking about bringing people here to help with

your education, before you came in, I was looking up in your book case up there and I see those VCR tapes on continuing education. That has been important to the dental profession here just like to the medical profession.

Dr. Hand: It is a way. I think it's one of the least effective ways. To me, there's nothing better than having the clinician right here in front of you, but it is a mechanism. That's helpful to a lot of the fellows who just haven't been able to get a group together, and he sees the tapes and says I would like to get into that, a big help.

Dr. Patterson: Are you glad you came back to New Bern to practice?

Dr. Hand: Yes! I can't imagine being any where else. I don't know of a place that I'd rather be than New Bern. I've enjoyed all of the things that we have here that are available to us, the environment, I had no qualms about coming to New Bern.

Dr. Patterson: I'm the same way. I don't know of any other place where I could be happy. Let's shift to New Bern and talk a little bit about the way New Bern used to be. You grew up on Johnson Street and your dad had a club down at the end of Johnson Street, and you remember Johnson Street from East Front Street to the river, I guess as well as anybody. Could you tell me the way you remember that block from East Front Street to the bridge and about the bridge? What houses were there? What about Edgerton Drive and the way it used to be?

Dr. Hand: There are three structures on Johnson Street, East Front Street to the bridge that are not there now. All the rest of

those structures that existed back in those days, exist now. Those three structures were apartment houses right back of the house on the corner of Johnson and East Front.

Dr. Patterson: That's your house? These apartment houses were right behind your house?

Dr. Hand: Absolutely, two frame apartment houses, one a double house. Then, Mrs. Smallwood's house that was over the water, was destroyed (on East Front Street).

Dr. Patterson: Which Mrs. Smallwood was that?

Dr. Hand: That was, was it Eli, her son did the architect for the post office?

Dr. Patterson: I'm not sure. So, her house was built over the water?

Dr. Hand: There was a summer house. Her house was Bob Morrison's house, where Bob lived. But she had this summer house that was built over the water at the end of her lot.

Dr. Patterson: And the bridge was right there?

Dr. Hand: The bridge was a block away.

Dr. Patterson: I'm mixed up now. The bridge came in at the foot of Johnson Street.

Dr. Hand: Okay, then there was that big brick house on the corner, where I live, the Eckberg's house, that's the next one to Mrs. Smallwood's house.

Dr. Patterson: Oh, all right. Going down East Front Street?

Dr. Hand: Right. She had this nice porch around the whole thing,

built over the water.

Dr. Patterson: That's where Boyd Myers lives now?

Dr. Hand: That's right. Those three houses were destroyed, and to my recollection, the rest of that whole section hasn't changed a bit. Except, one house has been torn down now, that was Ed Street's house. They did build a house back there on his lot, but Ed Street's home was torn down. That was next to the Bishop house.

Dr. Patterson: So, Mrs. Smallwood's summer home went, and the three apartments behind the house you're living in on Johnson Street?

Dr. Hand: Right, and then there's a little tin garage there that the Harvey boys did some work in. That was not much of a construction, but that was destroyed too.

Dr. Patterson: What used to be on the corner of East Front and Johnson Street where the house that Charlotte Williams lived in, where it stands now?

Dr. Hand: Of course that was the main bridge avenue into New Bern. There was a Texaco filling station there. Ham Ferebee ran that.

Ham, as we all remember, was quite an athlete and baseball fan and quite a football player.

Dr. Patterson: All the Ferebee's were that way. So, there was nothing else between East Front Street and the bridge on that side except Ham Ferebee's filling station?

Dr. Hand: Who ran the marine railways there escapes me, but they had a marine railway and the marine shop right where Edgerton Drive goes to the North.

Dr. Patterson: Edgerton Drive had tracks down the middle of it did it, for the marine railways?

Dr. Hand? The marine railway went parallel to the bridge road way.

Dr. Patterson: Okay. What was Edgerton Drive like when you grew up as a boy, or was it even there?

Dr. Hand: I remember that as being almost a factory like road that served the saw mill that was there.

Dr. Patterson: Whose saw mill was that?

Dr. Hand: I don't know whether it was Blades or what, but it occupied just about that whole section.

Dr. Patterson: That includes the Baskervill lot and Beasley's place? That was all a saw mill?

Dr. Hand: Yes. Those pilings that you see out there that are rotted off, they were part of the foundation for it. I don't know whether they used it as a log pond or what, but I do remember the old dilapidated building that was there. Nobody went in it. It was rotten and finally fell down and that was it. But that was a mill at one time.

Dr. Patterson: There was a granite place there too.

Dr. Hand: Yes. They had a monument shop, whatever you call it, they'd cut the granite and polished it.

Dr. Patterson: They'd make cemetery stones. Was that Mr. Edgerton? I think that might of been Mr. Edgerton's place.

Dr. Hand: I don't remember that.

Dr. Patterson: Well, were getting down to the bridge now, right straight down on Johnson Street. What do you remember about that old bridge?

Dr. Hand: The draw bridge was one way, so the traffic coming from the other direction had to stop. It was hand operated by Odie Everington. He lived there by the draw bridge so he would be close enough to not only hear the boat whistles calling him to open it, but it afforded him a place to live. His daughter may have found the picture of that house that was there on that draw bridge. She'd been looking for one of those pictures, and I think she has found it.

Dr. Patterson: What's her name, Billy?

Dr. Hand: I'm just trying to think of her name. Her husband works for Maola. I could find the name for you. She's a patient of mine and the name escapes me right now (Nita Baker).

Dr. Patterson: Was the traffic heavy on the bridge?

Dr. Hand: It was the only bridge they had, yes, very much so.

Dr. Patterson: There were two lanes every where except for the draw?

Dr. Hand: Absolutely.

Dr. Patterson: Did a lot of ships go through that draw bridge?

Dr. Hand: The main shipping through there would be for logs because you remember Bunting's Mill over in Bridgeton, the Roper Lumber Company here, all of their logs. They didn't have much trucking as I understand it as far as volume was concerned. The volume of logging was done by water. They'd have rafts half a mile long of logs pushed

or pulled by a tug boat. They would go up and they had these log ponds that they'd put them in with big sluice ways that they'd lift them out of the water.

Dr. Patterson: You remember this as a boy?

Dr. Hand: Yes sir, absolutely. Later they started hauling a lot of logs by truck coming off that bridge, and they did a lot of damage to the house there that we lived in, the vibration and so forth. I was glad to see the bridge move.

Dr. Patterson: This bridge was destroyed in the hurricane of 1933?

Dr. Hand: It was totally, yes sir, absolutely. Now, the metal framework, the bridge was there, but the road ways leading to it on each side of it were destroyed. There was no planking left, there might of been a few planks left, but it was not useable.

Dr. Patterson? You're saying the draw bridge stayed, but the rest of it was gone?

Dr. Hand: That's right.

Dr. Patterson: That was repaired. They had to repair it?

Dr. Hand: Yes sir! I think it took them about ten days to get that back in shape because I ran a little ferry. There was no transportation back and forth and before they could get some boats lined up, I took a sixteen foot skiff with a little three horse outboard and would take two and three people to Bridgeton, pick up two and three in Bridgeton and bring them over to New Bern. I got ten cents a piece for them. (laughter)

Dr. Patterson: That's how you financed your dental education! That's wonderful. You did that until the bridge was fixed?

Dr. Hand: No, I didn't do it that long because very shortly they found tug boats and big boats that they could take twenty and thirty people at the time. They docked right there and unloaded and loaded. That was the way people got back and forth across that bridge.

Dr. Patterson: That bridge, once it was rebuilt, stayed there until the new bridge was built in the 1950's.

Dr. Hand: As I understand it. I don't remember the transition, whether the new bridge was two lane or whether they kept it one. I believe it was still one lane.

Dr. Patterson: The railroad bridge stayed the same though, hasn't it?

Dr. Hand: Yes. I don't remember how much damage was done to that.

Dr. Patterson: So, that's the same bridge that's been there all along. Well, while were in that location, let's talk about Dr. Hand's gang. Your dad had a house down there over the water?

Dr. Hand: He built a boat house. We had a little marine rail way there that the boys when they had wanted to pull their boat out to paint it and they could do it. It was made of regular railroad iron track, and a winch. We'd have to crank it up by hand. It worked fine. We didn't have to go to the boat yard to do it, we did it right there. Next to that was the boat house where dad kept his boat and next to that he built the clubhouse, a two-story club house for the

boys. There was a dressing room down below and then the meeting room up top. Then, some little docks for the boys to tie the boat up and then a big dock on the south end of the property and on that they had a diving tower. It was about fifty feet tall and three different levels to dive from, sliding board and diving boards. That was the beginning of that Troop 50.

Dr. Patterson: Until Troop 50 came along, it was called Dr. Hand's Gang. Who were some of the boys who belonged to that gang?

Dr. Hand: Jimmy Bryan and Bob Mier and Robert Whitehurst and Henry Whitehurst and Bobby Grantham and Grayson Waldrop and Jimmy Smith and David Lawrence and Albert Willis and Jimmy Gossard. Jimmy Gossard's dad was the head of Camp Kiro, the Kiwanis camp down there. David Stick (author) was down there when he'd come to New Bern. They are the boys that come to mind.

Dr. Patterson: Swimming in the river at that location was thought to be pretty safe from the standpoint of contamination?

Dr. Hand: I don't think they discussed it a great deal. They knew it was contaminated because it had to be. You could see it. All the sewers were open sewers going right into the river.

Dr. Patterson: I remember one coming in from New Street going out. I didn't know they came in that high up, I guess they had to though.

Dr. Hand: Yes sir. I think about every block they had a sewer line. My hypothesis is the fact that the reason we were all so healthy is we were pretty well immune to anything after swimming in that water!

(laughter) Most of us are still here and still going!

Dr. Patterson: None of us have had typhoid fever.

Dr. Hand: That's the truth. But it was filthy, it was terrible!
I can remember it.

Dr. Patterson: Was there a lot of boating on the river as you grew up, fun boating, pleasure boats?

Dr. Hand: A lot of sail boats. Now, you go out and you don't see anything but motor boats, and outboards, but in those days the sail boat was the boat on the river, and there's a lot of boating on the river. That was pleasurable too.

Dr. Patterson: Sailing at night time?

Dr. Hand: Sailing at night time, day time, whenever.

Dr. Patterson: Who were some of the folks who had sail boats in those days?

Dr. Hand: Rodman Guion probably had one of the epitome of sail boats that was almost like one of these racing yachts that America's Cup was like except only a smaller scale. The Meadows, Sara, Ecky and Bucky, they had a big Sharkie, and that was a very fun boat because you could put fifteen, twenty people on it, and he would go. Little Rod Guion, he was one. Norfleet Gibbs was another of the boys. They were a little younger than I was.

Dr. Patterson: Did you have a sail boat?

Dr. Hand: Yes, we did. We had a Core Sounder. This is during the Depression, and dad had done some dentistry for a gentleman down on the coast and he said he didn't have any money but he would pay

for it with a boat. He built it with his own hands, he used natural knees in the boat. I'll never forget him, because when he delivered the boat to Morehead, I said, "Dad, why has he got tears in his eyes, why is he so emotional about this boat?" Dad says, "well, he loves the boat and he has spent a lot of time and effort on it and it meant more to him than just wood."

Dr. Patterson: Clarence Kirven lived along there too.

Dr. Hand: Yeah. Clarence had a boat that was right next to the dock that he kept there, a big, nice sail boat.

Dr. Patterson: He lived in which house?

Dr. Hand: He lived in Eckberg's house. John Haywood Jones bought that house at one time. Now, when the Kirvens had it, I don't know, that's before my time over there. I remember Clarence Kirven, a big, tall, good looking guy, but I don't remember John Haywood living there. That was before my time.

Dr. Patterson: The Dr. Hand's gang situation developed into Troop 50 Boy Scouts, there was just a growth into that.

Dr. Hand: That's was before you had your Cub Scouts and so forth. We had to wait until we were "x" years, I don't think it was twelve years old, to become a Boy Scout. Then, we started having a formal program of development from first class, second class, and so on.

Dr. Patterson: The same young men that you were talking about belonged to this Troop 50?

Dr. Hand: Absolutely.

Dr. Patterson: That was about the time Troop 13 was out in

Riverside, and Troop 11 was forming downtown.

Dr. Hand: Mr. C. Green, and then Mr. Potter, the surveyor.

Dr. Patterson: And your dad was the Scout Master of Troop 50?

Dr. Hand: Yes.

Dr. Patterson: And that went on for some time?

Dr. Hand: Yes, it certainly did.

Dr. Patterson: What happened to the clubhouse?

Dr. Hand: I don't remember what happened to it. I don't know if a hurricane took it or not.

Dr. Patterson: It probably did. It took those houses right along there.

Dr. Hand: The clubhouse and all of that did not last until those houses were destroyed. Those houses were destroyed in about 1954, '55, in that big hurricane, and they were lost long before that time.

Dr. Patterson: That was the end of Dr. Hand's gang. Was it the end of Troop 50?

Dr. Hand: I don't think so. I think they went on for a period of time, but I was off at school at the time and it's hard to remember all those.

Dr. Patterson: Do you remember the trolley cars?

Dr. Hand: Oh absolutely! I remember them waking me up at night. We had a sleeping porch there at the house.

Dr. Patterson: This is the house on Johnson and Craven?

Dr. Hand: Yes, and they'd go right by there and the things would wake me up. In the day time you would hear them and that was great

because we knew when the trolleys came by, we knew what time the ice wagon would go by, and we'd jump on the end of the ice wagon in the summer time and getting pieces of ice was a treat. The car rang a bell when they would be by cause they were all pretty much on a time table a little bit.

Dr. Patterson: The trolley came right down Craven Street?

Dr. Hand: It certainly did.

Dr. Patterson: I remember it came by New Street heading South. I guess it went both ways, I'm not sure. You rode those trolleys some?

Dr. Hand: I don't ever remember being on one.

Dr. Patterson: Do you remember much about South Front Street, Billy, what it was like with piers and wharves?

Dr. Hand: No. I just remember the first place of business there on South Front Street was a coal yard that my uncle had. That was the property that is now pretty well owned by Culligan and went straight to the water.

Dr. Patterson: What was your uncle's name?

Dr. Hand: Ellis.

Dr. Patterson: Oh yes.

Dr. Hand: Now, there was Elijah, that was my grandmama's husband. But anyway, he had a place of business there. Then, on down the next place of business that I remember, was the Meadows Shipyard. We're going from Trent river bridge; the first place of business was the coal yard and that eventually became an oil depot, the family that

leased out to the oil people for off loading. We're on the Trent river going west from where the bridge is right now, and the oil people took that over from the coal yard, and the family still owns that. Then the next place of business that I remember was the Meadow Shipyard, and that went bankrupt I would say that had to be back in the 1930's or somewhere in there. Then, next to that was a baseball factory for baseball bats. They made axe handles and they made handles for tools, but I very distinctly remember the great thing about it, you know, being a boy and liking baseball, was that they made baseball bats. Then, next to that eventually developed into Barbour Boat Works and absorbed that factory and that took you right up to the railroad tracks so to speak.

Dr. Patterson: Then, the George Street bridge was up beyond that?

Dr. Hand: Okay, there was Maxwell's Wholesale Grocery business at the end of one of those streets. I've missed some places in there, but anyway, that's my memory of South Front Street. Crabby's was there, and the South Front Street boys where they had their clubhouse. That is rather hazy in my mind.

Dr. Patterson: That's pretty good, Billy. You've done very well with that. I don't remember all those places. I should, but I don't.

Let's get back to Crabby's for a minute. It seems to me that in those days the town had definite geographic groups of young people. Where you lived were sort of the downtown folks, the South Front Street boys, and then the Riverside, and the Ghent folks. Down on South Front Street, their center was Crabby's. Do you remember the building that Crabby's

kept for his boys?

Dr. Hand: I remember not only the building that Crabby kept for the boys, I remember Crabby's place that I felt was almost like going into the Washington Monument because Crabby's was such a tradition as a mechanic and as a person. You just felt privileged that he would speak to you!

Dr. Patterson: What did he do?

Dr. Hand: He was a mechanic, a machinist. I'd say, machinist mechanic, and he had these lathes in here, a very small machine shop.

But he had a fascination evidently for children and they had one for him. He was always just as kind to you as anybody could possibly be.

Dr. Patterson: Didn't he build a place there just for young folks?

Dr. Hand: Now, I don't know wherever that originated. I do know that that brick building that Crabby's had was a place for them to dress, a place for them swim, and built over the water, and everybody envied being a member of Crabby's.

Dr. Patterson: His place was in the first block of South Front Street near the water, right?

Dr. Hand: Right in there.

Dr. Patterson: I eventually became a member of Crabby's. I remember a little bit about it. I took care of Crabby when he died in the 1950's. What was he like himself? How do you remember Crabby? Was he a big man or a small man?

Dr. Hand: No, very short, stubby person. He loved a cigar. If you had a problem with machinery or something, he would do what

he could for you.

Dr. Patterson: Was he an easy man to be with and to talk to? Did you like him?

Dr. Hand: I did, I think because I'd heard dad speak of him so many times as being a master machinist, so I was kind of in awe of him. I don't remember him being overly friendly, he wasn't unfriendly, but he always responded to you.

Dr. Patterson: You know any other particular members of downtown New Bern and growing up in that area that we haven't touched on?

Dr. Hand: At the foot of where Maxwell Wholesale Grocery used to be, when we would look down the river and see the oyster boats or skip jacks coming up the river, it'd be what they'd call "wing-n-wing."

They'd have a sail out on this side with a boom out and then they'd push the jib out on the other side. The wind would be coming from the South, so that would hold these sails out and you could see them along way. And they'd say, "the oyster boats are coming in," jump in an outboard motor, and go catch them down at the can buoy, which is right off of where Johnny Ward lives now. They'd call it the can buoy. We'd run up along side of them and say, "sure would like some oysters, would you trade us a bushel of oysters for a quart of oil?"

"Glad to do it." So, we would come back to New Bern with a bushel of oysters, the first oysters that the boats had brought in. They would go in at the foot of the street down there right next to Maxwell's and that's where they would dock. In some of the old photographs you'd see these oyster skip jacks docked right there. The highlight of the

season was to catch the first oyster boat coming up and run down in a outboard and pick up a bushel of them for a quart of oil.

Dr. Patterson: Now, these were New Bern boats?

Dr. Hand: I don't know where they came from. I have no idea.

Dr. Patterson: Where did they get their oysters?

Dr. Hand: Evidently down at the mouth of the river, I'm not sure. But I suppose that was prolific. They've have them there for years until the pollution.

Dr. Patterson: Was any shrimping in the Neuse river then?

Dr. Hand: I don't remember.

Dr. Patterson: Billy, that's a great memory, I'm glad you mentioned that. Any other particular memories?

Dr. Hand: Another wonderful memory I think, was shared with Alex Meadows and boys we used to go fishing with, Bob Whitehurst and so forth. One of the great trips that we would take would be in this little sixteen foot boat with a three horse power motor. We'd go up Northwest Creek and we'd go up there and fish for Bream. We'd catch them, and then at noontime we'd go ashore and build a fire and cook our hot dogs. That was an all day trip. That's right where Fairfield Harbour is today. Today I'd fly over it and see that place and remember it, remember the different changes that have taken place. You treasure those memories, you treasure the pristine beauty that we had. You wouldn't see anybody there, you'd never see a soul, you were alone where it was peaceful and quiet, and developers come in.

Dr. Patterson: Just you and your friends with a fire?

Dr. Hand: Yes, absolutely.

Dr. Patterson: I wondered at that moment where I was when you were doing that, wish I'd been with you! Let's look at something that's a little bit more serious. During your stay in New Bern, a lot of things happened about race relations and segregation. Can you look back and comment on the way things used to be between the white and colored races when we were growing up? What was it like?

Dr. Hand: Our relations with the blacks have always been, I think, one of developing affection for those that we came in contact with any period of time. We certainly didn't object in any way that I can ever remember, or hearing my parents ever saying any thing derogatory about them. The people that worked for us, I think loved my mother and loved my grandmother and they were the times when they would stay with you. I was babysat by a colored person as far back as I can remember. She still calls me her "baby", and she's still living, ninety-something years old. She became a part of the family and they did the same thing, the people that worked for dad. He started off a young black man here in New Bern working for him, doing things around the yard and got him interested in the vocational guidance school.

We say how wonderful these things that we have here in the community college, and that's true, but we had them back in those days too, and that was in the 1930's. He went into brick laying. Dad got him interested in the brick laying at the school, and they taught him that trade. He now teaches. He formed his own brick mason company.

Dr. Patterson: What's his name?

Dr. Hand: Luke Martin. He's been teaching in those schools, and came up a well respected individual. I felt my parents did what they could for them. They help guide and direct this particular one.

Those that have been in the household, we think just as much of them as we do a member of the family. So, I was never subjected to and never developed any apathy or any ill feelings toward the blacks. When we started our educational efforts here in the private school, there were two or three that asked, well, what about blacks? My position was that I had no objection to them at all. I can't say that was universal in the board of directors in that educational effort.

Dr. Patterson: What board of directors are you talking about?

Dr. Hand: We started this private school here in New Bern.

Dr. Patterson: Okay. Billy, you were here through the beginning of integration and lived through that. How do you think New Bern handled school integration and the civil rights movement of the Sixties?

Dr. Hand: Well, you could go back a lot further than that. You could go back to the Civil War. I haven't heard it discussed a great deal, but I mentioned to you the last time we were talking about how New Bern became the center as a refuge for blacks. So, New Bern really has a history of open-mindedness, in my feeling, towards them. When the fathers in the city went to the commanding generals of the Union Army who were about to attack New Bern and asked them if they would please be kind to New Bern and not devastate it, that they would open the town to them and would not have any military opposition. And that offered a haven to the blacks. That's why we have so many blacks in

the population. They'd flock to New Bern as a haven because it was under Union command.

Dr. Patterson: Was this the same time they were flocking to James City?

Dr. Hand: Yes, absolutely. The city was under Union control and the New Bern fathers had asked them to come into New Bern openly and without opposition, and they did. So, I think that's a good heritage for this city to have. I'm sorry people don't realize that. They did it purposely. Not so much directed towards the blacks, but simply to save the town, but nevertheless, they knew what was going to happen.

So, I feel that New Bern is rather a little bit open minded about it.

Dr. Patterson: Do you think the integration and civil rights movement was handled pretty well when that happened? Do you recall any particular problems?

Dr. Hand: I never got involved with that. The only involvement that I can remember was the Ku Klux Klan, and some kidnap threats, and my dad carrying a pistol. He was very opposed to that sort of thing.

Dr. Patterson: Do you remember the Ku Klux Klan in New Bern?

Dr. Hand: Yes, very much.

Dr. Patterson: This was long before the civil rights movement?

Dr. Hand: Yes sir. This had to be back in the early Twenties.

Dr. Patterson: What sort of things were they doing in town.

Dr. Hand: I don't know, this was just personal.

Dr. Patterson: But there was no great disturbance or uprising in the thinking of the white people in the early Sixties?

Dr. Hand: I just can't remember any instances.

Dr. Patterson: You don't remember any problems with the Martin Luther King assassination?

Dr. Hand: No, just as a person who hated to see it.

Dr. Patterson: So, from your standpoint things just eased along pretty well?

Dr. Hand: I don't think that I really got into the basic situation there or anything that was adverse at all.

Dr. Patterson: Well, Billy, can you think back to the Depression and comment on how New Bern was during the Depression?

Dr. Hand: That had to be my very early years, so I think the only comment that I could make on it was how it affected me personally.

My personal life I would say was affected primarily with dad being subject to the needs of the people. Those needs were very limited.

They didn't have money to do anything with; consequently, the practice was very meager, coming home with a chicken, coming home with a bunch of vegetables in return for services. I remember that very distinctly.

I didn't understand I guess because I'd never experienced it before.

I remember when I went to college, dad didn't know how much money he should let me have so he called Mr. Ed Lanier, he was head of the self-help program, and he asked him a question that really affected me. He said, "What can this young man really get by on at Chapel Hill?", and Ed told him \$300 a year, and that's what I got! So, I don't remember

any particular thing about the Depression.

Dr. Patterson: I don't remember a whole lot about it. I remember the banks closing. Let me ask you about something else I think you'll remember. How about hurricanes in New Bern? What do you remember about hurricanes?

Dr. Hand: They are devastating when you have lived through them. I've seen automobiles washed across the street, I've seen houses deteriorated to the point where the occupants were in the second floor. Taking them out you'd have to use a boat to go to the second floor.

Dr. Patterson: Any hurricanes you have in mind?

Dr. Hand: That was the big hurricane in 1954, or 1955.

Dr. Patterson: At that time you were living where you are living now?

Dr. Hand: Yes, on East Front Street.

Dr. Patterson: So, you were right at the point where you could see all this. What was it like during those Fifties hurricane?

Dr. Hand: You felt the house move, you felt it shake! We had water that was, I guess, eight feet deep there right at our backyard running almost up into the house itself. The house has a basement you can stand up in. The people that were in these apartments that were washed away, some of the people, the National Guard came by and told them all to get out. They didn't do it. So, the next morning after the hurricane had hit us the water was way up, and we realized that we had to get these people out. They were still on the second floor. After spending all night long in that second floor there was

nothing to eat, nothing dry. So, we took these outboards and went to the second story windows and took them out. The children were so terrified that you couldn't touch them, just screaming and hollering.

They had spent the whole night. There in the house that had disintegrated around them, chimney falling down, dark, didn't have any light. I will never forget one of the mothers said, "Look what I brought out in this house. I've got a child in diapers, wet clothes, and I brought a package of cigarettes and my lighter." So distraught, they just didn't know what they were doing. We found out about it.

I was looking in the second floor window looking out toward the water and I saw this person. The swell would catch him and it looked like he might touch his feet on the bottom, he'd make way a little bit.

He came up to the front door, and I said, "come on in and get some coffee." We had some sterno and he did. I said, "is there anybody out there?" He said, "I don't know, I think there are," and that's the way we found out. He swam out of the dern place and just happened to stop at the front door. Then, we got the National Guard and a boat or two and went down there and got them and took them up to the Red Cross. But those children were just absolutely terrified!

Dr. Patterson: To do this now, to get out of your house to that house, you had to go by boat?

Dr. Hand: Yes. We took the boat over there because we had about a four foot brick wall out there and that boat went right over that brick wall and right on.

Dr. Patterson: So, the water was in your house?

Dr. Hand: When the water subsided, started to go down, my wife and I, we had double doors at the back, and we had dust pans. As the waves would break, that water would roll in, it was coming in to the main part of the house, and we were scooping it out. Over at Rod Guion's, I went over there the next morning, and it was a mess just like a jungle.

All the telephone poles were down and the light and the wires were there, and you just had to climb through it. The most disheartening sight that you could imagine. When I went into the house, they had gas, and I thought I could get some things, we were about to run out of butane, but I mean of sterno or coffee and cocoa for the people who were staying in the house with us, and their curtains were pulled up off the floor and all of her silver, big silver bowls, everything that she had, from the leaks in the roof, spotted all over her living room and dining room. They'd finally just given up and gone to bed.

The loose timber that was floating in the water, just banks of it, from the mills and from the destruction of the houses that were adjacent around there. It's a frightening situation to go through.

Dr. Patterson: All of East Front Street was under water then, very deep?

Dr. Hand: Oh my goodness yes. Very much so.

Dr. Patterson: Up above you going North in the 600 block they were using boats in there too?

Dr. Hand: Absolutely.

Dr. Patterson: Do you remember any other hurricanes? The '33 hurricane?

Dr. Hand: We were not living on the water at that time. We were a block away from it, so I don't remember anything about that hurricane except the bridge had been out and no transportation back and forth.

Dr. Patterson: You are a great fisherman and a great hunter.

Dr. Hand: I enjoy the outdoors. It's not so much the hunting any more, it's the enjoyment of getting out.

Dr. Patterson: As a young man, did you do a lot?

Dr. Hand: Oh sure, fishing and hunting. I liked the outdoors.

Dr. Patterson: Who were your buddies then?

Dr. Hand: I guess Alex Meadows was probably the stalwart companion as far as outdoor business was concerned. Alex has always been an exceptional outdoors man, superb ornithologist. We just had some marvelous times together.

Dr. Patterson: Alex is older than you are, in fact quite a few years older.

Dr. Hand: He sure is.

Dr. Patterson: Do you remember Bucky Meadows?

Dr. Hand: I certainly do.

Dr. Patterson: What do you remember about Bucky?

Dr. Hand: The tragedy of his life there. I don't remember a great deal about his personality. I guess I must of been eight or nine years old when he died.

Dr. Patterson: He died during the war in a plane crash.

Dr. Hand: Bucky?

Dr. Patterson: Bucky was about your age.

Dr. Hand: All right, I guess that does brings it back to me. I hadn't thought about it in years.

Dr. Patterson: Bucky was in the Air Force and his plane crashed.

Dr. Hand: Was he in combat?

Dr. Patterson: No, it was not a combat situation. I don't know exactly the details. I think it was in this country and it was in the early days of the war. Well, Billy, I think we've done very well with this interview. Perhaps I ought to just ask you a general question then. Are there other things that you would like to talk about that we haven't touched on?

Dr. Hand: It always gives me pleasure to credit the University of North Carolina and their school of dentistry, what they've done for this state and what they've done for my profession. I'll always be grateful for that, and I think most of the dentist that I know of are appreciative also.

Dr. Patterson: As far as your life in New Bern, your growing up here, your memories, can you think of any other topics that you would like to touch on?

Dr. Hand: I would like to mention one thing. I'm sure there's been some comment about the private school that we started. In our family there are some educators, one of them was the principal down at the federal schools system in Camp LeJeune and his wife teaches there also. They both told us, you had better test your child if you anticipate him getting into college or going to a prep school. I said, "why?" He says, "because you will find that there may be

discrepancies in his education that will require some uplifting to get him accepted." Well, gosh, we thought every thing was going along fine, A and B's, until they were tested.

Dr. Patterson: Talking about Bill now?

Dr. Hand: Talking about Beth and Bill, 'til they were tested and found the discrepancies, and tried to find out what was happening, and realizing that they were not getting the educational background that we thought they were getting.

Dr. Patterson: At what level was he at that time?

Dr. Hand: He had to be in about the sixth grade. That was the reason that I got so involved with this new private school.

Dr. Patterson: This must of been about 1970 or there about.

Dr. Hand: It was earlier than that, it surely was. This was brought home to me in Chapel Hill. Most of my friends in Chapel Hill were Woodberry or Episcopal graduates. I had one year of prep school. I saw the difference that that made. I saw the way that they were taught to study, their exceptions. They were so far ahead of me it was pitiful! I told myself, I said, "if I ever have an opportunity when I have children, they are going to have a good education, a good education!" So, it was really through my association with you Woodberry boys and Episcopal boys that it brought that to my attention at an early age when I was a freshman at Chapel Hill. Then the rest of this evolved primarily from that realization that just because you think you're getting a good education doesn't mean that you're getting it.

Dr. Patterson: What was the name of the school, Billy?

Where was it?

Dr. Hand: I don't remember the name of it. The first school we had was right down there at Mrs. Simons, where she lived, where Ed Meadows used to live. Do you remember that house?

Dr. Patterson: On South Front Street?

Dr. Hand: Right.

Dr. Patterson: Is that the same house that Ecky and Bucky lived in?

Dr. Hand: No, one down.

Dr. Patterson: Where John Peterson has his office now?

Dr. Hand: Where John Peterson has his office is where Ecky lived, I believe.

Dr. Patterson: No, Ecky lived in the tall gables.

Dr. Hand: Okay. This house is burned down now. It's that vacant lot next to the filling station. That became our school. I don't know whether we called it the Danes School or whatever, and then we graduated from that and went out here to River Bend and built out there.

We had to build a complex out there. We had some help from Jim Paden's family. The private school was called the Trent Academy and the first building was the old Charles Manor that was the Ed Meadows old home as I understand it. Eventually, when we outgrew that place, we went out to River Bend.

Dr. Patterson: Was that before River Bend became this big development?

Dr. Hand: It was when he was doing it. She made a profound

impression on both of my children. She got Bill interested in studying. They'd come home in the afternoon and instead of wanting to play, they'd want to study. I thought, man that impressed me!

Dr. Patterson: Billy, you had a big role in getting this school going.

Dr. Hand: There was Lucy Dicktel, very, very strong in personality. She owns Culligans. Then, Mrs. Danes was the educator in the system. She was a motivator in the education system.

Dr. Patterson: She lived in New Bern?

Dr. Hand: She moved here from Wisconsin, I believe.

Dr. Patterson: Just to do this?

Dr. Hand: Just to do this, right. We hired her.

Dr. Patterson: You hired her from Wisconsin? Do you remember her first name?

Dr. Hand: Lois, Lois Danes. She made, I think, a big impression on the people in New Bern.

Dr. Patterson: Who worked with you on this enterprise?

Dr. Hand: We had two categories of individuals; those that wanted to get their children out of the black environment, okay? And then those that were interested primarily in education. Dr.

Patterson: You had a Board of Directors?

Dr. Hand: Yes.

Dr. Patterson: You remember who was on that Board?

Dr. Hand: Yes, I sure do. Morris, the insurance Morris.

Dr. Patterson: Kenneth Morris?

Dr. Hand: Right. Jim Paden, he was able to give us tremendous financial support through his family, one of the largest construction companies in the world. He was head of Texas Gulf when he was here.

Jimmy Huff was on it. And Don Dicktel. Williams, who his wife, Elsie, was Elsie Stevenson, married the Williams that was on the Board of Education. I think that was it.

Dr. Patterson: Were you Chairman?

Dr. Hand: Part time.

Dr. Patterson: So, you were the prime mover?

Dr. Hand: No, I was not the prime mover. I would say that the individual that gave more impetus to this than anybody was Lucy Dicktel, even though she wasn't on the Board. Her husband was on the Board.

Dr. Patterson: How long did this school last?

Dr. Hand: I don't remember how long.

Dr. Patterson: Some years though.

Dr. Hand: Yes, it surely did. It lasted ten years or so. Libby Ward told me at one time, he said, "it will never last, son." I said, "why?" He said, "people are not going to continually spend money for education," he said, "they are not geared to do it! " Well, he was wrong because I see Parrott Academy still going strong. So, where we failed, I don't know, except for the fact that it takes a community to support it. Parrott Academy, they've expanded to they've got buses everywhere.

Dr. Patterson: I know it. I see them over here. Your children

went to the Trent school though?

Dr. Hand: Yes, they did.

Dr. Patterson: That's good to know because school is something we are zeroing in on too, and we have a Task Force.

Dr. Hand: I appreciate the opportunity to let somebody know that school was not just done for segregation. It may of been that way in some people's minds, but there were a number of us that felt very strongly that education comes first.

Dr. Patterson: Were there any black children going to that school?

Dr. Hand: No.

Dr. Patterson: Would they have been prevented from going?

Dr. Hand: I don't think they would have. I really don't. But it all came down from you guys at Woodberry and Episcopal!

Dr. Patterson: Well, that's good to know.

Dr. Hand: I saw how well you all were becoming.

Dr. Patterson: Billy, I know you've got to move, and I think this has been a great interview. I have enjoyed it and I can tell you for the Memories of New Bern group that this is going to be most helpful. What we're going to do is have this typed up, and I'll bring it back to you for you to look over and correct whatever needs to be corrected. If you don't have anything else to say we'll sign this off and let you get on your way.

END OF INTERVIEW

