

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

EUGENE DEVLIN MCSORLEY, JR.

INTERVIEW 1045

This is Dr. Joseph Patterson representing the Memories of New Bern Committee. My number is 1000. I am interviewing Eugene D. McSorley, Jr. at his residence at 200 Country Club Drive in New Bern. The number of the interview is 1045. The date is February 16, 1993.

JOSEPH PATTERSON: We are at Mr. McSorley's home and Fred Latham is with us. At present he is copying some pictures but when he's finished he will sit here and join in the discussion with Mr. McSorley and myself. Gene it's a pleasure to be here in your home out in the country club area talking to you. You are an old New Bern historian and I know you had some trouble from some surgery on your back yesterday and we appreciate your letting us come. Let me start by asking you your full name.

EUGENE MCSORLEY, JR.: Joe Pat my name is Eugene Devlin McSorley, Jr.

DR. PATTERSON: Where were you born?

MR. MCSORLEY: I was born in the Caton Hospital in New Bern, North Carolina on May 23, 1917.

DR. PATTERSON: 1917 was a good year.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: Gene, tell me about this Caton Hospital. Where was it?

MR. MCSORLEY: Caton Hospital was located on Queen Street at the corner of Craven, the junction entering into North Craven and Queen Street. It was a brick building.

DR. PATTERSON: Excuse me, which corner was it on?

MR. MCSORLEY: It was on the east corner, northeast corner, a brick building three stories high. It was later occupied by the Salvation Army and they used that for their headquarters. Matter of fact, they are still there but not in that building. That building was destroyed.

DR. PATTERSON: Was it burned down or torn down?

MR. MCSORLEY: Torn down.

DR. PATTERSON: These are memories from the day of your birth, is that right?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yes. You know when I first opened my eyes and said oh, hey the world's here. Then I recognized all this around me naturally.

DR. PATTERSON: Where were you living then? Where was your home? Where did your parents live?

MR. MCSORLEY: Metcalf Street. It was between Pollock and South Front. Of course now I have no recollection of that. I only remember the hospital. (Laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Did you grow up at that address?

MR. MCSORLEY: No. My mother died at my birth so my father, of course, after that we went to live with my aunt who had built a house in a new development in New Bern which was known as Ghent. I was there, lived with them for two years. Then my great aunt, my grandmother and my great uncle took my sister and myself in with them and we were raised by my grandmother and my great aunt.

DR. PATTERSON: Where was your father?

MR. MCSORLEY: He was here.

DR. PATTERSON: But you weren't living with him?

MR. MCSORLEY: No. That's right, not for awhile. Then later on, this is a number of years later, my dad moved in with us.

DR. PATTERSON: What did your father do?

MR. MCSORLEY: He was with O. Marks Company in the shoe business, a wholesale shoe operation.

DR. PATTERSON: Where was that located?

MR. MCSORLEY: That was located on Middle Street which was as you recall in your teen years was Belk's Department Store. That was the O. Marks building. They had moved from the corner and built this building. It's right next to the First Baptist Church on Middle Street.

DR. PATTERSON: And your father was working with the shoe department?

MR. MCSORLEY: That was a wholesale shoe company.

DR. PATTERSON: No clothing?

MR. MCSORLEY: No, they sold shoes to all the different department stores throughout the area during those days.

DR. PATTERSON: Where were those shoes made? Not locally?

MR. MCSORLEY: No.

DR. PATTERSON: They were the agent for dispersing them?

MR. MCSORLEY: That's correct, wholesale distributors.

DR. PATTERSON: Now would it bother you to talk about your mother's death?

MR. MCSORLEY: No.

DR. PATTERSON: She died in childbirth?

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right.

DR. PATTERSON: What were the details of that? Do you remember anything about that? Did she hemorrhage or...?

MR. MCSORLEY: As I understand it she developed a kidney problem. I don't know any details.

DR. PATTERSON: Gene, there are just the two of you children.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right.

DR. PATTERSON: Your sister, Virginia and you.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's correct.

DR. PATTERSON: You're the youngest?

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right.

DR. PATTERSON: How much older is Virginia?

MR. MCSORLEY: Two years.

DR. PATTERSON: After you had moved to Ghent, how long did you live out in Ghent?

MR. MCSORLEY: A couple of years.

DR. PATTERSON: Then where did you go?

MR. MCSORLEY: My uncle and his two sisters lived at I'd refer to it as the, you recall it, Charlie Hall Ashford had his office in that same old building - some doctor bought it now, I don't know who it is - on Pollock Street. It's between...

DR. PATTERSON: That's Dr. Aiken's home now.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right. That's Dr. Aiken's home now. But Mr. George Fuller was on one side of the house and Uncle Walter Brinson

had the rest of the house. My first memories is that little office that was attached to that brick building which later became Dr. Ashford's office.

DR. PATTERSON: So you grew up in that neighborhood then?

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right until, no, not really. I mean then we moved from there and Mr. Fuller had built a house out in Riverside. Then we moved to the Tryon Palace wing that was left on George Street. We had an apartment there and Mr. Barbour, of Barbour Boat Works, he had the other side of the house.

DR. PATTERSON: There were several apartments in that wing.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's correct.

DR. PATTERSON: You were downstairs?

MR. MCSORLEY: Downstairs.

DR. PATTERSON: What was that building like?

MR. MCSORLEY: It was a grey stone building. It had a central hall that divided the apartments upstairs and down and the stairs just went straight along side of the wall upstairs. It was a comfortable building and we had a good place to play. Outside was this big cistern. That was a great thing. We always wanted to go in there.

DR. PATTERSON: That was part of the Tryon Palace?

MR. MCSORLEY: That was part of the Tryon Palace. Matter of fact, that was the only wing that was left.

DR. PATTERSON: The cistern was a part of the thing?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: Gene, who were some of your neighbors in that area?

MR. MCSORLEY: Coming out of the front door facing east to your right was the Duffy house, Miss Lonie Duffy. To the left, I've forgotten who that was.

DR. PATTERSON: Matthew Hall?

MR. MCSORLEY: No, that wasn't until we get to South Front Street. Oh, not Matthew. Matthew Hall?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. Alma Hall's family.

MR. MCSORLEY: No that was further down the street.

DR. PATTERSON: They were on that street.

MR. MCSORLEY: They were on that street. Billy Russell.

DR. PATTERSON: Billy Russell was north of you then.

MR. MCSORLEY: That was north of me and Alma's family was next door to them and Charlie Styron and his aunt...

DR. PATTERSON: Ina Bright?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah, was on that same street.

DR. PATTERSON: Do you remember across the street on the east side of George Street the Eaton's?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah, Sam, let's see now, wait a minute, on the corner the Stephensons and Sheila Nelson, then the Eaton's. Then there were several different...

DR. PATTERSON: The bridge was right down at the end of the street.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's correct, the end of George Street.

DR. PATTERSON: Do you remember that bridge?

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh, yeah, sure.

DR. PATTERSON: What was it like?

MR. MCSORLEY: It was a wooden bridge. It was a reasonably wide bridge for those days. It had a draw to let boat traffic pass through. It was a pretty busy little bridge, people traveling east and coming this way.

DR. PATTERSON: Was there a lot of automobile traffic in those days on George Street?

MR. MCSORLEY: There was perhaps, yeah, a reasonable amount for that time and that period for the fact there was traffic going down east.

DR. PATTERSON: I've talked to and interviewed some of the black people who now live in James City. They remember walking across that bridge to New Bern. Was there a lot of walking traffic back and forth?

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh, yes, it was a reasonable amount.

DR. PATTERSON: What were some of the businesses at the foot of that bridge on the New Bern side?

MR. MCSORLEY: I'm coming off the bridge now coming into New Bern. On the left side it was a seafood, Nelson's Seafood, wholesale seafood. They bought fish from the local fishermen. Next to that was a service station. No, wait a minute. Next to that was a little small restaurant. Next to that restaurant was a service station. That was the end of that. Across the street there was a brick building, a residence. I can't remember who lived there. Let's get on the bridge again and start back on the right hand side entering New Bern.

There was a regular community of little buildings there. There was a restaurant there too later known as Hamilton's. There was a Sanderlin Battery Company on the waterfront. Then there was a service station coming up there, Esso service station, Hadnott, is that right? Then crossing the street there was a building and I don't remember who was in that but later that was torn down and there was another little.. Lewis', what was Lewis' name?

DR. PATTERSON: Butler?

MR. MCSORLEY: That was his boy. Anyway, whatever his name, Lewis ran a little restaurant there.

DR. PATTERSON: Was that at the corner of George and South Front?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yes it was. Then next to that was a residence there with a long front porch. Joe Pat I don't remember who was there.

DR. PATTERSON: Gene, do you remember Kenneth Jones' filling station?

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh sure.

DR. PATTERSON: Where was that located?

MR. MCSORLEY: Now that was on, going up George Street now cross Pollock and in the middle of the block between Pollock and Broad was Kenneth Jones' service station.

DR. PATTERSON: On the west side?

MR. MCSORLEY: On the west side. Now let's see who...

DR. PATTERSON: It wasn't on the corner.

MR. MCSORLEY: No it was not. There was a service station there,

a Sinclair service station there later but his was not on the corner.

Fred Latham: His was Amoco.

MR. MCSORLEY: His was Amoco, that's right. And what was the guy's, he limped, that lived next door to that, next to Kenneth's? I know him. I can't remember his name. Do you know who lived next door to him? Do you remember? Golly, I wish Lil was here. She remembers his name.

DR. PATTERSON: How long did you all live in the Tryon Palace wing?

MR. MCSORLEY: Well at the time of the great fire, 1922, we were there. I remember going out on the street and when they starting dynamiting, what in the world's going on! We had a dog, big Chesapeake retriever. That scoundrel was scared to death hearing the boom going on. So we all went out front and looked down and my Uncle Walter came back and told us that it was a devastating fire and they were having to dynamite some of the buildings to keep it from spreading and that he didn't know whether it would control it or not but it wouldn't be a bad idea if we would sort of get some things together because you don't know what will take place. But, that was a...

DR. PATTERSON: Did you get things together?

MR. MCSORLEY: Well, I don't know what my family did because I was...

DR. PATTERSON: You were five years old.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah, so I just remember I was told what he said.

DR. PATTERSON: Do you remember whether you left home?

MR. MCSORLEY: No we did not. The fire was finally controlled.

DR. PATTERSON: Then how long did you stay there?

MR. MCSORLEY: I think, I'd say a year or two, not long.

DR. PATTERSON: Where did you go?

MR. MCSORLEY: I forgot what happened they were doing about the Tryon Palace but anyway right back of Tryon Palace was Eden Street. We had rented a house right next to Biddie Mitchell. Did you know Biddie?

DR. PATTERSON: Biddie?

MR. MCSORLEY: Biddie Mitchell they called him. Yeah. That was Johnny Mitchell's uncle. But anyway, we lived there.

DR. PATTERSON: On Eden Street?

MR. MCSORLEY: On Eden Street and it was a big apartment house right next door that Nelson Bowden and his family and some other people I don't recall but I know Nelson and all of them and then...

DR. PATTERSON: Which side of the street was that on?

MR. MCSORLEY: That's the west side. West side.

DR. PATTERSON: Is that house still there, that apartment house?

MR. MCSORLEY: (The house was owned by Miss Hay, willed to Miss Eleanor Marshall, now occupied by Falls family - still standing next to Tryon Palace Parking Lot) If you recall they moved one of the buildings. Anyway, that is from the corner, there's a big parking lot there now. Next to that was Baxter's, Mr. Bennie Baxter and his father lived there. Next to that Mr. Mohn who later moved on the

corner of Pollock and George.

DR. PATTERSON: M-O-H-N.

MR. MCSORLEY: M-O-H-N, Mohn. Then next to that was Sumrell, Mr. Eugene Sumrell. He was an engineer on the railroad and his son is a lawyer here now.

DR. PATTERSON: Ray.

MR. MCSORLEY: Ray. They lived there. Then down on the corner there was a little grocery store, Mr. Ball.

DR. PATTERSON: Which corner is this, Gene?

MR. MCSORLEY: That's the southwest corner of Eden Street.

DR. PATTERSON: Of Eden Street and?

MR. MCSORLEY: South Front.

DR. PATTERSON: Mr. Ball had a little grocery store there?

MR. MCSORLEY: Un-huh.

DR. PATTERSON: What was in the area where Craven Terrace is now? Not Craven Terrace, the housing project?

MR. MCSORLEY: There was a series of houses there. It was known in those days as Long Wharf. You know just colloquialism. And there were a number of houses in that area.

DR. PATTERSON: Were these white and black people or just one race?

MR. MCSORLEY: Well no. At the time there were more whites than blacks but turning the corner which would be Spring Street, there were some blacks up in that area. But most of them down in that section on either side of the street they were majority white.

DR. PATTERSON: Did South Front Street extend in a straight line west?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yes.

DR. PATTERSON: How far did it go?

MR. MCSORLEY: Well, I'll say yes until you got to Spring Street. Then you turn and it was New South Front after that.

DR. PATTERSON: Just like it is now? That curve is still there.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yes. It was a little more abrupt. Yeah, that's right.

DR. PATTERSON: And on the east side of Eden Street across from where you lived there were houses all along there now where Tryon Palace is presently.

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh, yeah, yeah. Now on the corner of Pollock Street and Eden on the west side there was a big house there. I don't remember who it was right now. I know who it was too but I remember that he became an insurance agent (Sam Coward). But I've forgotten who it was. Then next to that house the back yards of Billy Russell's residence came all the way through to Eden Street. So did the other two houses beyond it. Then there was one small house next to the Tryon Palace property. Then you moved on to a house next to that. They didn't have any kids for us to play with so I've forgotten who they were. Then the next house to that was Mr. Falls, C.H. Falls. No it was H.V. Falls, Howard V. Falls. He was with Thompson Veneer Company. What do you call those people that run the sawmills?

DR. PATTERSON: Sawyers.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's close enough.

DR. PATTERSON: Was that the veneer plant on the Neuse River?

MR. MCSORLEY: That was the veneer plant on the Neuse River at the corner of South Front and East Front. Later that became Horner's Veneer. Later it was destroyed, became nothing. So that was Mr. Falls and he had a boy named Howard Falls. Howard Falls and myself were friends and Billy and Eddie Russell. And that covers that street other than on my side I didn't tell you that up on the corner there where Mr. Lipman lived, corner of Pollock and Eden on the west side.

DR. PATTERSON: The southwest corner? Ball's Grocery was on the southwest corner.

MR. MCSORLEY: Northwest corner.

DR. PATTERSON: Mr. Lipman lived there?

MR. MCSORLEY: Sam Lipman, Mr. Sam Lipman and his family. Next to that Mrs. Hay. What was Mrs. Hay's name? Had a great big old - I think ya'll preserved it. I think you've still got that house. Big old two story house with double balconies, a front porch.

DR. PATTERSON: That's on Pollock Street?

MR. MCSORLEY: No, that was on Eden Street. It was on Eden Street and the next house was Biddie Mitchell's. But I can't remember what Mrs. Hay's name was. But one of the people that rented an apartment there was a family named Blumgardner. How do you like that one? But they were just, at that time we thought they were an elderly couple.

DR. PATTERSON: Weren't as old as we are now? (Laughter)

MR. MCSORLEY: No. We won't mention that. (Laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Okay, now how long did you live on Eden Street?

MR. MCSORLEY: About, let's see, maybe a year or so because we moved to South Front Street when I was in the second grade. I would have been eight.

DR. PATTERSON: Now when you moved to South Front Street did you move into a family home?

MR. MCSORLEY: No we didn't. South Front Street, to give you the exact location, on the corner of South Front and Craven going toward East Front was a large brick building. Next to that was two small houses.

DR. PATTERSON: On South Front Street?

MR. MCSORLEY: On South Front Street. Then recessed back from the street was a big three story or two and a half story house. It was owned by Dr. Hand. It was later moved I believe or torn down, torn down I reckon. But anyway, that house, Uncle Walter rented that because they had bought the property which later became Craven Foundry and moved where they were on South Front Street, moved it over to where Craven Foundry presently is. So we lived there.

DR. PATTERSON: Renting from Dr. Hand?

MR. MCSORLEY: That's correct, from Dr. Hand. Then Mr. Wade Meadows' house next door, they moved and that came up for sale and Uncle Walter bought that.

DR. PATTERSON: Wade Meadows' family moved out in the country to Green Acres then out there on what's Trent Boulevard now. Is that right or is it Highway 17?

MR. MCSORLEY: I think it was Highway 17. It was Highway 17 at that time at Senator Simmons' residence.

DR. PATTERSON: That's Trent Boulevard.

MR. MCSORLEY: Trent Boulevard now. Was outside of town a little.

DR. PATTERSON: That whole area has been developed by Young Graham Barden and many houses put in there. But anyhow, you moved from the house you were in to the Wade Meadows home next to you. You bought that?

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right. And of course, until I was married that's where we lived. As a matter of fact, until the whole family died then that was the end of that.

DR. PATTERSON: How do you remember South Front Street?

MR. MCSORLEY: It was a great place to grow up. Oh, I remember everything about South Front Street. I even remember one person that I keep trying to forget but I don't reckon I ever will, a guy named Johnny Mitchell. (Laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: You want to forget Johnny?

MR. MCSORLEY: Why not? (Laughter) No, no.

DR. PATTERSON: I know you're kidding about that one.

MR. MCSORLEY: (Laughter) But at that time Johnny Mitchell, he lived right next door and we had a whole group. We call them the Union Point Wharf Rats.

DR. PATTERSON: That was a very good name for you.

MR. MCSORLEY: (Laughter) That's right. If we existed today and did the things we did then we would all be in reform school.

DR. PATTERSON: You'd be in prison.

MR. MCSORLEY: We probably would but we had a great time. But most of the things that we did that I regret I don't notice in the younger people. We made up a lot of our games and a lot of our activities. For an example, one of the simple things all boys did at that time, if you had an old pair of skates you made a scooter out of them if you remember. You just took two boards four inches wide, twenty-four or thirty inches long, nail it on the end, put a skate wheel under each end, you had a scooter. We had a wonderful time doing things like that.

Another thing we did we had the advantage of a trash dump right down the street.

DR. PATTERSON: At Union Point?

MR. MCSORLEY: At Union Point. We'd go down to Union Point. One of the things we loved to do was get old gas tanks off of cars that had dumped there. We would take those gas tanks and take some boards that we'd find at Meadows Shipyard and strap them to the tanks and make us a raft. We had a lot of fun on those rafts. The Pamlico Cutter at that time was docked right next to the shipyard. They didn't like us much.

DR. PATTERSON: On the Trent River?

MR. MCSORLEY: Trent River right at the dock there and on several occasions we disturbed the crew quite a bit because they'd have to come get us and bring us back.

DR. PATTERSON: From your rafts?

MR. MCSORLEY: From our rafts which if the wind was blowing the wrong way and we decided we didn't want to paddle on that thing anymore we just waited for them to come get us. I don't know why they didn't treat us affectionately but we seemed to just upset them a little.

But we enjoyed that. Some of the other things that we did that I'm afraid none of the mothers would allow this today, we got an old piece of cable from the trash dump. We tied the cable back of the house to a tall pecan tree. Ran that thing to the back lot.

DR. PATTERSON: This was back of the Meadows house?

MR. MCSORLEY: Back of the Meadows house. And if you recall the way the Meadows lot, it was say a hundred feet on the front or whatever it was, it went back to the same depth of the house next to it and immediately back of their property it was a right angle.

And about another hundred feet across that lot coming across the back it made a wonderful place to play back there. We would take that rope, that cable, tie it to the tree, got us a pulley, hooked that pulley on there and tied us a rope on it. In order to join the club you had to come down that thing.

DR. PATTERSON: I've been on that thing too.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah, that was a lot of fun wasn't it? I drew a sketch of that just to show you what I was talking about. You know we tied it to a tree and then would slide down it. Right at this post we dug a hole and put a post, there's the way the lot was shaped, see it goes back like that. Can you see it up at the top of the page there?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's the way it was. But anyway down at that trash pile we took an old car seat out, the spring, and tied it to the post we put in the ground and we'd take two of the boys, we got us a piece of canvas down there. One would stand on each side and hold the canvas about four feet in front of that post and they had the spring tied to the post because you'd come down there brother, you'd be flying and that would break you until you could hit that thing and bounce off. (Laughter) Boy that was fun. Yeah, that was a lot of fun.

Then I'm sure all of you fellows used to get old tires. We had a fun deal with old tires. The smaller boys would get inside of the tire. Then we'd race to those tires when there wasn't any activity on the street.

DR. PATTERSON: You'd get inside the tire?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yes, sit inside the tire and hold your hand like that and the bigger boy, he'd roll us.

DR. PATTERSON: You'd be rolling end over end inside the tire?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah. Had a lot of fun with that.

DR. PATTERSON: I act like I don't know anything about it but I was there too. (Laughter)

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right. Another thing we did, we all had to learn to swim. It wasn't a matter of a long process of teaching you the proper way to swim. Some of the bigger guys would just say

let's get overboard. I don't swim. You're going to learn now. And over you'd go. But they would help you.

DR. PATTERSON: Where were you swimming?

MR. MCSORLEY: This is right next to the Marine Railways on the East Front Street side. It was a slip that was there if you recall and it was a little dock thing that went out and we would swim in there and later Crabby developed his organization there. But we became reasonably good swimmers, not in perfect style, of course. And we used to play water witch. I know ya'll have played that. Chase each other and swim all the way across Trent River. (Laughter) Sure would.

Another thrill we used to get when the Menhayden boats would come into the shipyard for repairs and maintenance out at the crow's nests where the guy would stand up there and look for the school of fish, we used to when they'd dock them at the end of the dock in deep water we used to go up there and we'd always dare each other which one would jump off, dive off.

DR. PATTERSON: From the crow's nests?

MR. MCSORLEY: From the crow's nests. Stand outside that thing and jump. That was great fun.

DR. PATTERSON: How high were those crow's nests from the deck?

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh,...

DR. PATTERSON: Fifty feet?

MR. MCSORLEY: I don't think it was that tall. Oh, it may have been from the water. May have been fifty feet from the water. But I don't think it was over thirty, thirty or forty.

DR. PATTERSON: And you would do that would you?

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh yeah. I'll tell you a very interesting story about this person, Howard Falls. Later years when Crabby took us under his wing he looked out there at the end of the dock and there was Howard up in the crow's nest. Come on down from there! Howard says you mean now? Right now! Chung! off he went. (Laughter) We had fun growing up. I'll have to tell you one other thing that you probably remember Joe Pat. Mr. Ball had a cotton brokerage. This is on lower Craven Street and it's on the east side of Craven Street. It was before you got to Stephenson's Brick Company. It was a big vacant lot there if you remember and there was a brick building that had an apartment in it and it ran reasonably long like it might have been part of a warehouse on this side. Mr. Ball had an office there but during the cotton season when he bought bales of cotton they would always stack them out in the yard. Now that was a good fun place to play on those bales of cotton.

DR. PATTERSON: Was this right on the river?

MR. MCSORLEY: No this was on the west side of Whitty's on the corner. Next to Whitty was Bengels Tin Shop. Next to that was...

DR. PATTERSON: Was this South Front Street you're talking about?

MR. MCSORLEY: No this is Craven Street.

DR. PATTERSON: This is Craven Street going north?

MR. MCSORLEY: Naw, you're heading south and it's on the east side.

DR. PATTERSON: Okay.

MR. MCSORLEY: You got me?

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah, I've got you. Whitty's was on the corner.

MR. MCSORLEY: J.C. Whitty Company was on the corner. Then there was another building he used for a repair shop. Next to that was Bengel's Tin Shop. And next to that was some little storage place and then this brick building and all that vacant place. Next to that was Stephenson's Brick on the same side. Next to that was Baugh and Sons Fertilizer. If you were out there was a railroad track that serviced the Meadows Marine and Meadows Company and also the veneer plant. A railroad track went through that area right there. Going from Baugh's now heading down the railroad track next to that was E.K. Bishop's.

DR. PATTERSON: Which way? Locate me again, Gene. Where are we?

MR. MCSORLEY: We're at lower Craven Street now. We're on the east side of Craven Street. We're down to the railroad track and the building beyond the railroad track is Baugh and Sons. That's right on the water. All these buildings I'll tell you about are on the water. Next to that was E.K. Bishop's warehouse. Next to that was East Carolina Freight Company. That was a freight company that was serviced by boats. Later they had a fire and Elliott lost his life in that fire, one of the local firemen.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes, the firemen talk about that.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah. But then after that was Meadows Shipyard. From Meadows Shipyard the next dock that came out was the Pamlico

Cutter.

DR. PATTERSON: Gene, while we're there at the Cutter, I have been meaning to ask you about this, what was the Cutter like?

MR. MCSORLEY: The Cutter was a large boat. The boat was perhaps, I'd say about sixty feet long. It's a low water draft. It didn't draw much water but it was bulky and high above the waterline. They had a full crew. They must of had I reckon ten or twelve seamen to operate it and I know Pollock, a colored steward was on that. Pollock, he later retired and Pollock, you see the name all over the place, he and his brothers.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you know Alex Haley?

MR. MCSORLEY: No I did not. I didn't know Alex. But then we're even, he didn't know me. But that was a real nice, big boat.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you go aboard quite a bit?

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: Was it a comfortable boat?

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh yeah. It was very comfortable. We thought it was a giant thing you know. They didn't come after us in the raft in that boat. (Laughter) They came in the...

DR. PATTERSON: In the skiffs.

MR. MCSORLEY: A little dingy came out after us. But after that was Meadows Mill Yard, Gristmill.

DR. PATTERSON: Beyond the Pamlico was Meadows Gristmill?

MR. MCSORLEY: Un-huh.

DR. PATTERSON: So the Pamlico was between the shipyard and the

gristmill, is that correct?

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right. And then next to that of course was Union Point.

DR. PATTERSON: And that was a big mess in those days wasn't it?

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh yeah. Yeah it was a mess.

DR. PATTERSON: Then you rounded the corner onto the Neuse River and the veneer plant was next to Union Point?

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right. Later the Texaco took over that and the plant was just destroyed. They had a storage house there, a storage place.

DR. PATTERSON: There were houses along East Front Street in that first block too weren't there on the east side?

MR. MCSORLEY: Un-huh.

DR. PATTERSON: Who were some of the people that you remember living there? The Gwaltneys?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah, the Gwaltneys lived on the south side, wait a minute, east side of the street. There was, let's see, the veneer plant. There was a little office building. There were two little houses there and then the Gwaltneys. They lived there. I used to know who lived next door to the Gwaltneys.

MR. MCSORLEY: Who?

Fred Latham: Morrisons?

DR. PATTERSON: Morrisons?

Fred Latham: Bob Morrison lived there.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yes, yes he did. Right. And next to that was a big old brick house.

DR. PATTERSON: That's still there?

MR. MCSORLEY: That's still there. That's the only one that's left, isn't it?

DR. PATTERSON: Well the one next to it is gone. The one on the corner of Pollock and East Front is gone. Across the street in that first block where the Pak-A Sak food store is now, do you remember what used to be there?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah. That was on East Front Street now you're talking about.

DR. PATTERSON: No this is on East Front Street now. Going from the corner of South Front Street heading north.

MR. MCSORLEY: There was a house on the corner that faced South Front Street and then around the corner there was another house that Gus Sanson who was a shoe cobbler that had a place on Middle Street and he had two or three children.

DR. PATTERSON: How do you spell his name, Gene?

MR. MCSORLEY: S-A-N-S-O-N-E. Gus Sansone. I've got to tell you a good story that my dad - Johnny Mitchell won't ever forget this one. He reminds me of it constantly, every time I get a haircut. When we were kids dad came home one day and he said hey, go get a haircut. You didn't ask any questions you just got the quarter and went down to the barber shop. So when he came home later that afternoon Johnny and a couple of the other boys in the neighborhood, we were

out front playing. My dad starts up the steps and he turned and said Gene, who cut your hair, Gus Sansone? (Laughter) We had had that thing cut down so. Mitchell has never forgotten it. Every time he sees me and I've had a haircut he says who cut it, Gus Sansone? (Laughter) Gus lived there and the next place was the Billy Hurtt and Ready Hurtt. Do you remember the Hurtt's?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. Didn't they live on Short Street too?

MR. MCSORLEY: They may have later but at one time they lived there.

DR. PATTERSON: That's H-U-R-T-T?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah. Then after that, I forgotten, a guy ran a tugboat, I don't remember his name, lived in a house there and then the Ellis'.

DR. PATTERSON: That house still stands.

MR. MCSORLEY: That house still stands. Then Dennis Paafe was the house next to it? (The house next to the Ellis' belonged to Alma Tucker. Next to Alma Tucker was the Dennis Paafe house - he ran a restaurant)

DR. PATTERSON: He had the restaurant.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: On the corner of Craven and Pollock? That's where Gus Davis' place was?

MR. MCSORLEY: Un-huh. Then, I started to say the Nunn house but the Nunn house faced Pollock Street.

DR. PATTERSON: That was Judge Nunn's brother's house?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah, right, Mary Nunn.

DR. PATTERSON: Mary Nunn. I forget Mr. Nunn's first name. Judge Nunn's name was Romulus and his brother's name was something like that. I don't think it was Remus but it was something like that.

MR. MCSORLEY: Something like that, yeah. But I don't remember where the house was right on the corner where there's a service station.

DR. PATTERSON: We were talking about the corner of Pollock and East Front Street. The Nunns lived there. Let's get you back to South Front Street. You talked about the South Front Street Wharf Rats.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: And you belonged to that group.

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh, yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: You mentioned Bobby Sparrow being a member of your group.

MR. MCSORLEY: And Don Sparrow. Then there's Bucky and Ecky Meadows. Ed (Meadows) was too young to play with us. Then there was a guy named Dan Wiggs that lived down on the corner of South Front and East Front right there in the corner. Let's see we had, what's his name, Durant Bell. We called him Teeny Bell. And I'm trying to remember Dog's name, Dog Bell, Garland Bell. We called him Dog.

DR. PATTERSON: In later years John Pat and Donald Patterson.

MR. MCSORLEY: Only when they would come. They would come down and spend during the summer, come down and stay with us during the

summer. They got of course involved in the situation too. I was trying to think of the neighbors - oh wait a minute, Robert Patterson. Do you remember Harry?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MR. MCSORLEY: And Robert and Bill. Three Patterson boys lived next to the Mitchells. Now they were the older group - Dan, Reid, Fuller and Shoot Hall lived across the street. But they kept us in trouble all the time. Did an excellent job of it. But we had a good crowd.

DR. PATTERSON: Almost every person I talk to my age in New Bern remembers something about Crabby and of course you were right there in the midst of all this. What do you remember about Crabby and Crabby's place?

MR. MCSORLEY: Well, Albert Crabtree was probably one of the best influences on the boys, the Union Point Wharf Rats, of any person that I can remember. He also touched a number of other young people. But Crabby had a little machine shop. He was a machinist by trade. We used to go down to his little shop. His shop was located in the Meadows Gristmill yard. He decided that he needed to do something about these boys. So he got the Meadows Company to let him use one of their vacant warehouses which he cleaned out. We formed what was known as the Union Point Club. In that warehouse which extended out over the river, over Trent River, he got a pool table from somewhere. I can see the old Meadows Company office, they had, in those days it was popular to have this wrought iron petition in the offices and

Crabby took those out and made us a little fenced-in place. And they had a radio in there. He had some tables that he had made. We used to have card playing. And on the side of the building he petitioned off and made dressing rooms, had one for the boys and one for the girls. Out back of that building he made docks that ran parallel out of each door and then crossed at the end. Out on that he had a swing and he had a cover over that swing. We had a diving board that went out at the end and on the side we had what was know as the high board. We used to go off of that. Out at about maybe fifty yards out Crabby fixed a nice little raft and anchored it so you could swim around and climb up on that raft. We used to have social events there. We had dances and we had this bridge playing deal and pool games, matches and so forth. It kept us out of a lot of trouble.

DR. PATTERSON: You say that Crabby was a great influence on your gang. In what sort of ways did he influence you?

MR. MCSORLEY: He advised us about certain things, our conduct and things, what not to do and to do. One of the things that I can remember that maybe I shouldn't tell in this story but his approach to our sexual conduct. He said the first one of you boys that I hear that messes up any girl you're gonna hear from me and you're going to bleed for it. He let you know right then. He would tell us various things. The funny part about it, Crabby was a bachelor. DR.

PATTERSON: He was a small man wasn't he?

MR. MCSORLEY: He was a small man.

DR. PATTERSON: A good machinist.

MR. MCSORLEY: Excellent machinist, bowlegged. I can see him right now.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you like him?

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh yeah, we were all crazy about him. Absolutely! He was just a fine man.

DR. PATTERSON: I was proud when I was accepted into that fellowship.

MR. MCSORLEY: (Laughter) I'd appreciate it if you'd call it a group, not a gang. (Laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Gene, did you and your friends go out on the river very much then?

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh yes. It was some of the boys that had sailboats, a couple of them and we had a skiff. We went in the skiff more than anything else, paddling, fishing, going fishing.

DR. PATTERSON: Now you have made some notes about Middle Street and the businesses that used to be on Middle Street. Why don't you take those notes or your memories and just talk about all of that.

MR. MCSORLEY: I don't believe I had any Middle Street.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, whatever you have.

MR. MCSORLEY: Well, I was going to tell you what was on Craven Street.

DR. PATTERSON: This is Craven Street?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah, let's see. This is Craven Street and this is from South Front to Pollock on the west side. Now there was a house on the corner on South Front and Craven and I don't remember

whose house it was. It was later torn down and there was a service station there, Simon's Service Station. Next to that was a building that my first memory of what was in it was Holton's Garage, Wallace Holton's Garage. (Before it was Holton's Garage, it was Seashore Trans. Co. maintenance shop. Then, Dr. Pepper Bottling Co. warehouse - then Holton's Garage. Then through the years that changed to many different things. But do you want me to tell you what they changed to?

DR. PATTERSON: Sure.

MR. MCSORLEY: Well, Holton eventually these people known as the East Carolina Motor Rebuilding Company, they moved in there. Then at one time I can't remember this man's name, I don't remember whether it was Simpson or Simpkins or something, but anyway he was a retired policeman and his home was originally here. He was from Washington or New York, one of the two, retired policeman. He came down and he rented that and started some sort of little business but he didn't stay there very long. I wish I could remember him because his son lives here today. He's in the insurance business, I believe he is. But I've forgotten what his name was. Lil would know. Next to that was an empty lot. Then there was a brick building and that was the Taylor Bottling Company. I know you know Dot Lee Taylor. That was her father's.

DR. PATTERSON: What did they bottle?

MR. MCSORLEY: They had Orange Crush and Pepsi Cola. They had the option of Pepsi, I beg your pardon. It was Nehi cola and Orange Crush. It was some other drink and I've forgotten what it was called

but it was grape. It was some kind of grape. Oh, they had a little chocolate drink too. I don't know what that was called. But anyway, then from there was the Johnson Machine Company. No, it isn't either. S.B. Parker was next. Then Johnson. I don't remember what was in that building before Johnson.

DR. PATTERSON: That's Carl Johnson. Didn't he have an automobile place there?

MR. MCSORLEY: No it was Junius and his brother that had, still got it there, Johnson and Junius. But Carl, he didn't have one there. But then let's see, up above Johnson's Machine was Nunn's law office.

DR. PATTERSON: Judge Nunn?

MR. MCSORLEY: Judge Nunn. Then next to that was Gussman, well it was an alley. You know an alley went through there. Then there was Gussman Cleaners. I don't know what was in there before. I'm sure there was something. As a kid coming up I didn't pay any attention to it. Then we had, let's see, there was Craven Motor Company occupied the building next to it and later that became W.C. Hagood Ford Dealer and that later became Coleman Motor Company.

DR. PATTERSON: That's on the other side of the street isn't it?

MR. MCSORLEY: That's on that west side street.

DR. PATTERSON: You're right. I'm sorry.

MR. MCSORLEY: Lil you'd better come in here. I need your help. The first building, the first business in there before Hagood was Craven Motor Company which was the Chevrolet dealer. You remember

that? The Chevrolet dealer was there. You're right. Then Coleman Motor and W.C. Hagood and all of that. Then let's see, the next was the Armory on down the street, the Armory. The Armory had an upstairs and Mr. Ben Williams, Lil knows which Williams it is. They lived upstairs. Then next to that was, no that same building down on the lower floors was Floyd Paul's Garage where Federal Alley is now and the Armory, all that came later. Then oh, let's see, then Richardson Printing Company. Then there's a house next to that. O'Hara's office.

DR. PATTERSON: Whose office?

MR. MCSORLEY: Colored fellow named...

LIL MCSORLEY: He was a lawyer.

MR. MCSORLEY: Lawyer, O'Hara. This office had a long little front porch on it. The building did, a wooden building.

DR. PATTERSON: I remember that building. I remember that.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah. Then next to that was a building that was sort of a storage house, wasn't it Honey, for Sun Journal?

LIL MCSORLEY: No I think that's what it is now. O'Hara's office was that little wooden building.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right. I said the one next to it.

LIL MCSORLEY: The one next to that was Stallings Plumbing at that time.

MR. MCSORLEY: Stallings Plumbing Company. That later became that storage house. Yeah, Stallings. Now let's see what else we've got here.

LIL MCSORLEY: Then the door that went upstairs to Stanley Hall.

MR. MCSORLEY: (Laughter) Yeah I was going to say, that's right. In that building you went upstairs to Stanley Hall. That's where they played basketball, high school basketball.

DR. PATTERSON: Somewhere right in there Troop 11 had it's headquarters.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right.

LIL MCSORLEY: Back when C. Green was...

DR. PATTERSON: When C. Green was scoutmaster.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right.

LIL MCSORLEY: That's what I told Gene because I remember one time they had a party on a Friday night and the boy scouts invited girls and C. Green was the leader. It was somewhere right in there, in the area that Stalling's Plumbing Company and Fred and Claire's is.

MR. MCSORLEY: I think it is too. I think it was in the same building that later became Mike Shapou's Sandwich Shop. I think that was the one.

LIL MCSORLEY: I think so.

MR. MCSORLEY: Wasn't it?

DR. PATTERSON: I think so.

MR. MCSORLEY: I think that was the one. But I had forgotten about the scout troop. But now let's see, Richardson Printing, of course we remember that one. Then Stallings, Mike Shapou. And what was the deaf and dumb fellow?

LIL MCSORLEY: Oh well he came in there later. You know I can't

remember that man's name but he had a print shop there.

MR. MCSORLEY: He had a print shop there too.

LIL MCSORLEY: The only reason why I remember all this is because at that time I was working over at Owen Dunn's across the street and Mr. Dunn told me that when he first started out in the printing business that his little print shop was over across the street where Stallings later was.

MR. MCSORLEY: Is that right?

LIL MCSORLEY: Un-huh. He said that his first printing that he did he had a little red wagon that he delivered his printing in. Of course that was before our time.

MR. MCSORLEY: I need to ask you the name of the building...

DR. PATTERSON: Let me just make a remark here and say that Mrs. McSorley has joined us, Lil, and is helping Gene and me remember things.

MR. MCSORLEY: How about recall? (Laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Recall. She's our instant recall.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right, instant recall, that's it. Well now that took care of that side of the street. Fred and Claire later came in that same building. Then there's a corner building that the entrance was on Pollock Street. Up above that was also the Stanley Hall.

LIL MCSORLEY: You mean the entrance on Pollock Street.

MR. MCSORLEY: On Pollock Street. Did I say Middle?

LIL MCSORLEY: Un-huh.

MR. MCSORLEY: She corrects me real often. Does a good job.

LIL MCSORLEY: Well I don't mean to.

MR. MCSORLEY: No, I want you to. Now we want to get the east side of that same street?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. Starting at South Front and coming up?

MR. MCSORLEY: South Front. Yep, then I can give you South Front going to the water.

DR. PATTERSON: Let's do it.

MR. MCSORLEY: All right. Now on Craven Street, now this is the east side.

DR. PATTERSON: Coming up from South Front?

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right, heading north. Now the first, my recollection, was Cavanaugh on the corner. The building was open, under structure. You know it wasn't bricked up as it is today.

DR. PATTERSON: What was Cavanaugh's?

MR. MCSORLEY: Cavanaugh had a service station. Then right in the back part of that service station, that building, Harris had a recapping, tire recapping shop, Mr. Harris.

LIL MCSORLEY: How about that ramp?

MR. MCSORLEY: Up above that building facing, standing in the street, Craven Street looking into the building, I'm looking east now, on the left hand side of that wall, that open building was open like that, there was a ramp, a wooden ramp that went up to the second floor. Wallace Holton had moved there and had a garage up on the second floor and the ramp.

DR. PATTERSON: The cars would drive up there and he would work

on them there?

MR. MCSORLEY: The cars would drive up there, right. But that wasn't the main part of that ramp. The main purpose for that ramp was us to get on skates and come down that ramp. Now that was the main purpose for the whole ramp. I mean the other thing was secondary.

But anyway, Wallace Holton was up there. Now later that whole building was bought and became part of Craven Foundry. The next building was Craven Foundry. Then the next building from that was Craven Foundry and the next one to that was Craven Foundry.

Craven Foundry & Machine Co.

Walter T. Brinson founded the above company in 1909. The first location was on the south side of South Front St. between Middle and Hancock Sts. In 1920, the business was moved to larger quarters located on the south side of South Front St. between George and Metcalf Sts. In 1925 or '26, the business was moved to 208-210 Craven St. (east side of Craven). At that time the company was incorporated. W. T. Brinson, President, was principal stock holder; Clyde C. Mason, V. Pres.; Guilford Lewis, Sec'y/Treas.

(a) Foundry: Main items in the foundry were related to lumber, saw-mill and fishing industries. - Cast iron grates for steam boilers; Gears for conveyor and belt-driven machinery; tongs used in logging; also gears and grates used in fertilizer manufacturing.

(b) Machine Shop: Four lathes were in use in the machine shop, including the largest lathe (at that time) in eastern N.C. Drill presses, punch machines, blacksmith tools, welding equipment

(acetylene and electric) were used for general repairs in the aforementioned industries.

In 1936, the company added an Automotive Engine Rebuilding Shop, which offered engine-block reboring, crank-shaft grinding, valve refacing, bearing pouring plus complete engine reassembling. This developed into the need for an automotive parts department to provide automotive parts needed for engine rebuilding. The Automotive Parts Department later became the largest segment of Craven Foundry & Machine Co. In 1936 J. W. Oglesby was engaged to manage the Engine Rebuilding Shop and subsequently became a stockholder and Treasurer of the company.

In 1942, a Mill Supply Department was added - supplying pulleys, flat box bearings for mill drive-shafts; bolts & nuts, washers and other items needed by local mills. Automotive parts and equipment and mill supply items were sold wholesale to car dealers, repair shops, garages, service stations and industrial accounts in Craven, Pamlico, Jones, Onslow, Carteret and Duplin counties. Due to the growth of the business, 202-206 Craven St. buildings were acquired and added to 208-210 Craven St.

Then, after the foundry there was a house. It was a wooden house which now is a vacant lot there. It was torn down and Mr. Wheeler, what was his name?

LIL MCSORLEY: Grey Wheeler's father. I don't know what his name was.

MR. MCSORLEY: Grey Wheeler's grandfather.

LIL MCSORLEY: Joy Belle's father and Bill Wheeler's father.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah. He had a little horse trading place there.

LIL MCSORLEY: That's what he was, a horse trader.

MR. MCSORLEY: If you remember him he always wore a great big western hat. I always liked that. He was a big man. But anyway, that was there and then it later became Coleman Motor Company's used car lot. Next to that was the city hall building. In that building, the first part of that building heading north was the Button Fire Company. They had their little deal in that building. They had an upstairs and they had a rod that you slid down on. Back in that alley underneath there, under the building, was the sanitation department. Then the next part of the building was the city hall. Next to the city hall was the W.C. Hagood, that big brick house there, W.C. Hagood bought that house.

LIL MCSORLEY: At that time the Isaac Taylor house.

DR. PATTERSON: That's where Mrs. William Ward lived.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right, next and then it became the William Ward house.

LIL MCSORLEY: It was kind of an apartment house at the time you remember it.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right. Today in that building we were talking about it was Mitchell's Hardware and later New Bern Auto Supply bought the building and it became New Bern Auto Supply.

DR. PATTERSON: I'm a little mixed up now. Just beyond the house that the William Wards had, this big brick house, was what you're

talking about?

MR. MCSORLEY: Un-uh, I said before you get to that house.

LIL MCSORLEY: He's going backwards.

MR. MCSORLEY: I'm talking about the city hall proper, there was a city hall, all of that complex. The first building that the Button Fire Station used that became Mitchell's Hardware.

LIL MCSORLEY: But that was in later, later years.

MR. MCSORLEY: Later years.

DR. PATTERSON: That was after it moved to South Front Street.

MR. MCSORLEY: I'm going to tell you what's in there now.

LIL MCSORLEY: It's a gift shop now.

MR. MCSORLEY: And New Bern Auto Supply. You can delete that from the conversation. Next let's see, there was a building. Mr. Williams (Ben) had a Chrysler dealership.

LIL MCSORLEY: That building is still there.

MR. MCSORLEY: It's right next to the Ward house.

MR. MCSORLEY: What was William's name?

LIL MCSORLEY: I don't know but I remember that there was an automobile dealership and his wife's name was Pearl.

DR. PATTERSON: Mr. George Attmore had a dealership in that building too.

LIL MCSORLEY: Probably.

MR. MCSORLEY: Probably did.

DR. PATTERSON: As I remember it it was Chevrolet but I may be wrong about it. I'm not sure. Plymouth was later there too.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah, I call it the Chrysler dealership. That was there.

LIL MCSORLEY: Of course, Eugene's memories will be earlier than mine. Mine are the late thirties.

MR. MCSORLEY: I reckon the Gryb's Electric Company is still there now.

LIL MCSORLEY: Or whatever the name of it is.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes I think so.

MR. MCSORLEY: Well anyway, that's what was there. Then there was a house there next to it.

LIL MCSORLEY: Where Owen T. Dunn's parking lot is.

MR. MCSORLEY: Where that parking lot is between the Dunn building and that was a boarding house in that lot.

DR. PATTERSON: Who lived in the boarding house?

LIL MCSORLEY: It was Mrs. Bray, Mary Mullineaux's mother. I don't know how Miss Mary's doing now but I'm sure she could tell you.

MR. MCSORLEY: She's in a rest home now I think.

LIL MCSORLEY: It was a boarding house when I, it was Bray's Boarding House.

DR. PATTERSON: A brick building?

MR. MCSORLEY: No, no, no a wooden building.

LIL MCSORLEY: A house.

MR. MCSORLEY: It was a house.

DR. PATTERSON: A large building.

LIL MCSORLEY: Un-huh. A porch all the way across the front.

MR. MCSORLEY: The front which was typical of the time. She served meals.

LIL MCSORLEY: Ran a boarding house.

MR. MCSORLEY: And had roomers, you know, a boarding house. Now let's see what else.

DR. PATTERSON: The Dunn building was there then?

MR. MCSORLEY: Owen Dunn yeah. That building was there then.

LIL MCSORLEY: You know at one time where that small part of Owen Dunn's, see some of this Mr. Dunn told me, was a bank at one time.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's the building next to where they tore down the wooden house.

LIL MCSORLEY: Un-huh. Then Mr. Dunn had bought it.

DR. PATTERSON: And Lil, you say Mr. Dunn one time started across the street?

LIL MCSORLEY: He told me, Mr. Owen Dunn said when he started out in the printing business he started over across the street where Fred and Claire's is now and he said they would print whatever the job was and he said they had a little wagon that they put all the printed matter in the wagon and delivered with that little wagon that was pulled by hand. Of course, at one time, Owen Dunn was one of the biggest printers in the state.

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh yeah, he certainly was.

LIL MCSORLEY: But he was an interesting man to talk to and listen to. But he did tell me that that was how he got started. I think

he said his father who was Mr. John Dunn, you know he was brother to Mr. Guion Dunn and Mr. Will Dunn and all that family, but his father I believe he said was Mr. John Dunn and I think he said that his father had a clothing store around there on Pollock Street.

MR. MCSORLEY: Pollock Street.

LIL MCSORLEY: Had you ever heard that?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes I think Johnny Dunn's father used to run that store.

LIL MCSORLEY: For his father.

DR. PATTERSON: That was his business until Mr. Guion Dunn died and then Mr., Johnny's father, went into the banking business.

LIL MCSORLEY: Banking business. I think so and Mr. Owen Dunn went off on his own in the printing business. But he was brother to Mr. Guion Dunn.

MR. MCSORLEY: But anyway, here's the Dunn building and next to the Dunn Printing Shop was C.H. Stith's, wasn't his name Stith?

LIL MCSORLEY: Un-huh insurance.

MR. MCSORLEY: C.H. Stith Insurance Company. I think that Johnny Taylor was in with him at that time, John R. Taylor. Do you all remember that? Do you remember whether he was or not?

DR. PATTERSON: I don't remember that. I remember the building.

LIL MCSORLEY: I imagine Elizabeth would know.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah she'd know but I think he was at the time. Then of course the Dunn Building on the corner was Gus Davis and his was the all time greatest pimento cheese wasn't it?

LIL MCSORLEY: Best pimento cheese ever been made.

MR. MCSORLEY: According to an authority.

LIL MCSORLEY: And Julia Mitchell agrees with me.

MR. MCSORLEY: There you go.

LIL MCSORLEY: You know Gus Davis had his hot dog place.

MR. MCSORLEY: And of course the office up above.

DR. PATTERSON: What did he call his place?

MR. MCSORLEY: Gus Davis. (Laughter)

LIL MCSORLEY: I think it was just called Gus Davis.

MR. MCSORLEY: Gus Davis. That's all I remember.

LIL MCSORLEY: I don't know whether it was called, I don't think it was called delicatessen. I think it was just Gus Davis.

MR. MCSORLEY: He couldn't spell it. No, they didn't...

DR. PATTERSON: That later became the Corner Grill.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right.

DR. PATTERSON: Gus Davis wasn't operating it then was he?

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh no.

LIL MCSORLEY: Well Gus Davis I think moved down to Morehead.

MR. MCSORLEY: Moved to Morehead. Did he have the...

LIL MCSORLEY: I don't know. He had something down at Morehead and his wife Catherine I think had a little shop over at the beach in the summertime. I don't know what Gus - I'll tell you who can tell you, Julia Mitchell would know.

MR. MCSORLEY: What was the name of the restaurant they wouldn't let you in because you had on shorts?

LIL MCSORLEY: That was his brother Andrew Davis'. Now this was back in what, I guess we were already married, early forties I guess. We were going outside fishing so we spent the night on the boat and we went over to Andrew Davis' cafe.

DR. PATTERSON: In Morehead?

LIL MCSORLEY: In Morehead City and we all went in to eat breakfast. Gene went to the rest room. Gene came out and I was standing outside.

MR. MCSORLEY: Peeping in the window.

LIL MCSORLEY: Looking in the window. He said the most pathetic looking thing you've ever seen. We were sitting there and Andrew Davis looked over and said you've got to get out of here. Well I looked all around to see who he was talking to. I knew it wasn't me. I wasn't doing anything wrong. Finally he came over he said you've got to get out of here, we don't allow shorts in here. So I had to leave his cafe and stand outside. (Laughter)

MR. MCSORLEY: That town's changed a little.

LIL MCSORLEY: Can you imagine that?

DR. PATTERSON: And Gene probably joined you after he finished breakfast. (Laughter)

LIL MCSORLEY: I think he might have come out and brought some breakfast to me. I'm not sure. But we have laughed about that.

MR. MCSORLEY: The truth doesn't become you Joe Pat. (Laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Gene, how about going back down the street then from South Front Street to the river on Craven Street. Was that

your next move? Is that what you were going to do next? I don't want to direct you too much.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's fine. Now we're going from South Front Street...

Mr. Patterson: Toward the river.

MR. MCSORLEY: Now wait just a second. Let's start on Craven Street corner and go down there. I've been part of the way.

DR. PATTERSON: That's what I'm trying to say.

MR. MCSORLEY: Alright, and then get that side of the street.

DR. PATTERSON: I'm still thinking about Lil outside that restaurant. (Laughter)

LIL MCSORLEY: In that pair of shorts.

MR. MCSORLEY: I've carried you down Craven Street, you know down to Baugh and Sons.

LIL MCSORLEY: Down to Pollock.

MR. MCSORLEY: Now I'm going to get on the west side. I've gone all down the east side. On the west side of the street there was a brick building.

DR. PATTERSON: Now where are we? Which block are we in?

MR. MCSORLEY: Coming down Craven Street...

DR. PATTERSON: From where?

MR. MCSORLEY: On the corner of Craven and South Front Street. The west side now, right across the street from J.C. Whitty Company. We're on that side of the street. You got me?

LIL MCSORLEY: Where the law offices are now, facing the river,

facing the Sheraton.

DR. PATTERSON: Let's just start all over again. You're on South Front Street.

MR. MCSORLEY: I'm on the corner of South Front and Craven.

DR. PATTERSON: All right. Crossing which way?

MR. MCSORLEY: Facing south and I'm going to tell you about the west side.

DR. PATTERSON: Of Craven...

LIL MCSORLEY: Craven Street.

MR. MCSORLEY: Heading toward the river. Okay. The first building there, big brick building and that building was the Nehi Bottling Company originally. They also made the Orange Crush and all those other things. Of course it's later become all kinds of things. Then there was a house. I don't know what they did in that house but there was a shaft that came out on the street like it held a pulley if ya'll recall that. And I reckon they were cotton brokers or wholesale boat supply people or something. Later right next to it you remember Jack Hollister, he had a paper distributing company of some type, sold all kinds of paper products. So he was there. Next to it was Hollister's Coal Yard. Next to that was Lupton's Freezer Locker.

LIL MCSORLEY: That was kind of back a little bit.

Fred Latham: Mack Lupton.

MR. MCSORLEY: Right. Then beyond that on that same side of the street was an old part of that warehouse that burned down but I don't remember what was in it. But I seem to think for some unknown

reason that I know that Battery D used to march up and down there. They may have kept their supplies in that building. I'm not sure of that.

Fred Latham: Right on the right of the railroad track. On the left of the railroad track.

MR. MCSORLEY: No, the railroad track ran across the street. Now I'm on the west side. So it's across the railroad track. There was a little structure there but I don't know what was there. That's the recollection I have of that street.

LIL MCSORLEY: How about the other side of it, the other side of that block?

MR. MCSORLEY: We went down that with him with J.C. Whitty and Bengel and all those. We've been down that side. Now do you want to know South Front Street on the south side of South Front Street?

DR. PATTERSON: Which block?

MR. MCSORLEY: Between Craven and East Front.

DR. PATTERSON: Sure.

MR. MCSORLEY: Well on the corner was J.C. Whitty. Next to it were two houses. They were tall, two-story narrow houses. People moved out to Ghent. One of them was Snooky Gillikin's brother.

LIL MCSORLEY: Ben Gillikin?

MR. MCSORLEY: Ben Gillikin.

LIL MCSORLEY: Brother or somebody.

MR. MCSORLEY: They lived in one of them. The other house this guy, what was the guy that was in with the wholesale grocery company?

LIL MCSORLEY: Which wholesale grocery?

MR. MCSORLEY: The Gillikin. What was his name?

LIL MCSORLEY: Mr. Ernest Gillikin?

MR. MCSORLEY: Ernest Gillikin. There you go. He was there. Then next was a big brick apartment building when I knew it. But I thought that my dad said that at one time, of course we know it as the Harvey mansion now, but it was a boy's school or academy when he was young.

DR. PATTERSON: Do you remember the name of that?

MR. MCSORLEY: No I don't. Lil even remembers me talking about it.

LIL MCSORLEY: I remember your daddy telling that. See I lived out in Ghent then. I didn't get down in that part of town.

DR. PATTERSON: It was pretty dangerous Lil.

LIL MCSORLEY: It was. I'll tell you.

MR. MCSORLEY: (Laughter) But anyway, I don't know what school it was. But now the next hall, C.H. Hall, Mr. Charlie Hall's house was next to that.

DR. PATTERSON: Shoot Hall lived there?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah, that's where he was raised. Mr. Charlie Hall was a real character. He was a wonderful fellow. He and Shoot decided they would fix them a boat so they went down in the basement and they made a boat was named the Weona. Good size boat. You could sleep eight or ten people on it. That thing just turned out to be a beautiful craft. They got the thing all finished and couldn't -

how are we going to get it out of here? So they had to tear the rear end wall of the house to get the boat out.

DR. PATTERSON: How do you spell Weona? W-E-O-N-A?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah. That was the Weona. Uncle Walter later bought that from Mr. Hall. (Laughter) We spent a lot of time on that Weona, all the boys. But Mr. Charlie Hall had one expression that I haven't ever forgotten. Somebody was doing something down at the shipyard and Mr. Hall was there. Someone said to Captain Charlie, "Have you got a knife?". He said, "Have I got my pants on?" (Laughter) I like that. But anyway, he was something. Then next to that was the Williams home.

LIL MCSORLEY: It was later Blanche but it was somebody else before that. Didn't the Barbours live there one time?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah but they lived there, I've got them on here, H.B. Barbour, Barbour Boat Works. Well it was the Davis house first.

LIL MCSORLEY: Yes, it sure was.

MR. MCSORLEY: It was the Davis house first. Then it was Barbour and then Williams.

LIL MCSORLEY: Then Blanche Williams.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah that's right, in that house next to the Hall house. Then there was a house that was back from the street, a low two-story house, sitting back from the street. That was a Davis house.

LIL MCSORLEY: Then the Shapous later lived there.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: Is that Martin Van Buren Davis?

MR. MCSORLEY: No, that was later and that was next to this house. But the Davis and I can't think, Tom Davis is the only name that I can remember. That was the son and he was older than we were. I don't remember but it was the Davis house. Then there was an alley went down to the shipyard. Next to that was the Dill home, Mr. Sam Dill. That's the house that you're talking about.

LIL MCSORLEY: That's where Martin Van, they had an apartment in that house.

MR. MCSORLEY: There were several apartments there and this Bell fellow I was talking about, Durant Bell and Dog Bell they lived there at one time.

LIL MCSORLEY: Then later Jane Dill and her husband, Rex...

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah, Rex Willis. They lived there at one time. But that was on that side of the street. Oh, and that little Davis house down there, later Mike Shapou lived there. They moved from Ghent or somewhere and lived in that house. I will say that Mrs. Shapou had more guests, I reckon that she was competing with the White House. I don't know who she was competing with but every Lebanese that came through this area stopped and had hot dogs.

LIL MCSORLEY: Stopped off to eat.

MR. MCSORLEY: To eat with Mrs. Shapou. She was a wonderful person. But anyway, that was one of the others. Now let me see if we can get back to, next to that Dill house was a tennis court.

DR. PATTERSON: Tennis court?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah. Mr. Ed Meadows fixed that. Had a nice

little tennis court there. It was a clay court. Next to the tennis court...

LIL MCSORLEY: Was it the coal yard?

MR. MCSORLEY: It was the coal yard but I was trying to find out what...

DR. PATTERSON: This the Meadows Coal Yard?

MR. MCSORLEY: No, no, no. Simpkins. The Hudnells got there. They were there and then Simpkins Coal Yard was there. Then of course the entrance to the Meadows Gristmill. Next to that right on the corner was the office building which you can see in that picture.

Fred Latham: Was that W.T. Hudnell?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah.

LIL MCSORLEY: It was Hilton Hudnell's...

MR. MCSORLEY: Hilton Hudnell's father.

Fred Latham: William Thomas.

MR. MCSORLEY: Un-huh. Then Simpkins Coal Yard. Allen Simpkins, I think he's dead too now. But then we had the Meadows office and then the trash pile was right next to him. But I've got to tell you some stories about that.

DR. PATTERSON: Go right ahead.

MR. MCSORLEY: The playful group that I grew up with, on the corner of East Front and South Front you just swung around the corner and right in front on the street of this Meadows office building was a nice tree that branched out over the street. So on nice warm days and nights we had nothing much to do so we had several buckets of

water. We would pass them up to the top. We'd get up on top of that building (Laughter). It was a flat top and we'd pass them over. And when somebody...

DR. PATTERSON: Out onto the limb?

MR. MCSORLEY: Pass them out onto the limb and somebody would sit there up in that limb right there and a car would pass by and if we found some courting was going on...

LIL MCSORLEY: Rumble seat.

MR. MCSORLEY: Choom! and we'd dump them right in there.

(Laughter)

LIL MCSORLEY: Terrible boys.

MR. MCSORLEY: That wasn't nice.

DR. PATTERSON: I would think they would have caught you.

MR. MCSORLEY: They may have tried to catch us. They never got close to us because we knew all the back yards.

DR. PATTERSON: You got off that limb and out of the...

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh man yeah! Man, it was just a matter of pulling that bucket, the one that was empty, and he was out of that tree and gone. We would get off the top of that building and go over the back or the side. There's no way they could get to us. Time they stopped that car they were up to the Mitchell house.

LIL MCSORLEY: How about unhooking the train from the engine?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah, that was another thing we used to do, that shifting engine.

DR. PATTERSON: What would you do?

MR. MCSORLEY: We used to go down there, well you know where the coupling with a shifting engine backs into a train couples? Well there's a pin that goes through there. All you've got to do is take the cotter key out and pull the pin out and sit back and watch the engine there and the flagman would be out there and he'd get... Okay, boom, wham! You know the coupling. That guy, I can see him now, throw that thing in full steam ahead and go up the street with nothing.

(Laughter)

LIL MCSORLEY: That was that railroad track that ran in behind there you know...

MR. MCSORLEY: That I was telling you started at Middle Street.

DR. PATTERSON: That went down to Hancock Street?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah, that's right. And it stopped at the veneer plant.

LIL MCSORLEY: I'll tell you those boys would have been in jail today.

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh yeah, we'd have been in trouble. Another good thing we did, this got publicity but nobody got caught. We used to take, had a dummy we got off the trash pile and we dressed the dummy.

And two of us we'd get on each side of the dummy. I'd be on this side and you'd be on that side and we'd see car start around the street and we'd run across the street just as fast as we could and drop that dummy. Of course the poor man would slap on brakes and do everything he could. (Laughter) That wasn't nice. Wasn't nice but it was a good trick on them. But somebody, I've forgotten who the guy was

now...

LIL MCSORLEY: Wasn't Alfred Kafer was it? I believe you told me.

MR. MCSORLEY: Was it Alfred? Of course somebody always had some paint or something we could throw right on there so it would look like they were bleeding and that kind of stuff. He got out Man and was about to have a hemorrhage. We were hid by then. But they thought that was the funniest thing they'd ever run into and went and reported it and we got a little publicity other than that. Almost as much as that Dr. Hand. (Laughter) I want to see that article sometime. The Dr. Hand and the Union Point Wharf Rat's baseball game. You say you have a copy of it?

DR. PATTERSON: Well I had a copy of it. Were you playing that day?

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right.

DR. PATTERSON: What was the score of that game?

MR. MCSORLEY: I think it was 62 to 2 and it was called on account of darkness in the second inning.

DR. PATTERSON: This was in Dr. Hand's back yard.

MR. MCSORLEY: Dr. Hand's back yard, that's correct.

DR. PATTERSON: It was 62 on the South Front Street Wharf Rat's side.

MR. MCSORLEY: Right, that's right.

DR. PATTERSON: And the downtown gang had 2. I was on that side.

MR. MCSORLEY: Well you told me you couldn't hit the ball.

(Laughter) Well anyway...

LIL MCSORLEY: You know the funny part of it is all those boys who were so bad growing up have all turned out to be nice big boys.

MR. MCSORLEY: Tax paying citizens.

DR. PATTERSON: You really think so Lil?

LIL MCSORLEY: I think so. Well your cousin Ecky Meadows was one of them.

DR. PATTERSON: Ecky turned out fine.

LIL MCSORLEY: Turned out fine. Gene turned out all right and John...

DR. PATTERSON: Gene's fair.

MR. MCSORLEY: (Laughter) I was going to say yeah, almost white.

DR. PATTERSON: We're recording it.

MR. MCSORLEY: I know it. I know it. Let me see where else we go. Is that it? Simpkins. Yeah, Union Point and the next one is Horner Veneer, well not - whatever it was. Now on the waterfront, I believe I told you about that though. We had the Baugh, E.K. Bishop, East Carolina Freight, Meadow's Shipyard, Meadow's Mill. I got Crabby a note down here. Pamlico Cutter Dock, we discussed that. George Roberts, he later, where the Pamlico Cutter Dock was, George Roberts...

DR. PATTERSON: The Pamlico Cutter.

MR. MCSORLEY: Pamlico Cutter. Where that docked Mr. George Roberts had a Sinclair Distributing Company. Huge tanks above ground you know. In the little building out front they built a little office. That was in the, I reckon that was the late, no I reckon it was early

forties, late thirties.

DR. PATTERSON: I would think that's right.

LIL MCSORLEY: I expect so.

DR. PATTERSON: Late thirties.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah he built that. So that's the south side.

(The north side of South Front St. between Craven and East Front was omitted.)

On the corner of Craven and South Front (north side) was Cavanaugh's Service Station; next were two small houses (both on the edge of the sidewalk); first house was Merritt residence, next was Joe Gaskill house (J. Gaskill McDaniel was his nephew); next was Dr. Hand's house, occupied by W. T. Brinson and family; next, J.A. Meadows residence;, T.J. Mitchell residence; Ed Meadows residence; J.M. Lucas residence; small house on corner of South Front and East Front (unable to recall who occupied house.)

Now lets see what we got over here. This is South Front Street. This is on the south side of South Front Street if you want to know what was on there when all those buildings were torn down I've got a list of them if you want to know. Want me to tell you about them?

DR. PATTERSON: Which block are we in now, Gene?

LIL MCSORLEY: The block you just finished?

MR. MCSORLEY: No. I'm coming up toward west now and I'm going to start on the South Front Street side.

DR. PATTERSON: This is the corner of Craven and South Front?

MR. MCSORLEY: Craven and South Front.

DR. PATTERSON: And you're looking west?

MR. MCSORLEY: And I'm looking west and I'm going to be on the south side.

DR. PATTERSON: All right, fine. I was going to ask you to go there.

MR. MCSORLEY: Okay, that Nehi Bottling Company was there that made Orange Crush, etc. That was Mr. Taylor's business. It later became the B&P Sales Company. After that it became, let's see, Henderson, McMillan and Cameron and they moved over next door and Henderson moved in there. Henderson Cigar and Candy Company. Next to that building, the building that McMillan and Cameron...

DR. PATTERSON: You were talking about South Front Street.

MR. MCSORLEY: Right. Next to that building that Henry Benton was in was Brooks Wholesale. It was a brick building and it had a towered front if you recall. Looked like a tower to the second floor, odd shaped building. But that was his building. Later it became Rulane Gas Company moved into there. Do you remember that one? Next to that was the Jennings-Flowers Motor Company. Then Johnny Boyd had a little repair shop in there and he did a lot of Mack Lupton's repair work.

LIL MCSORLEY: Was he behind Jennings-Flowers?

MR. MCSORLEY: No.

LIL MCSORLEY: Next to it.

MR. MCSORLEY: Then after that Cahoon in the same building, the Cahoon brothers, Ernest and Alvin Cahoon had a business there,

automobile repair business. Then next to that was Mitchell's Hardware.

DR. PATTERSON: That was the original site of Mitchell's Hardware, wasn't it?

MR. MCSORLEY: Far as I know it was. Then next to Mitchell's Hardware was a barber shop.

Fred Latham: Fifteen cents.

MR. MCSORLEY: Right. And next to that was the Gaston Hotel. Do you remember when that barber shop, when they got they got the Tryon Hotel, when they changed from the Gaston to the Tryon then they put in a restaurant there.

LIL MCSORLEY: Where the barber shop was?

MR. MCSORLEY: Where the barber shop was, un-huh.

DR. PATTERSON: Who ran that restaurant, the hotel?

MR. MCSORLEY: I imagine, yeah because you could enter it from the street or enter it from the hotel lobby either one. Then we had Braddy's Laundry, you know in the same building. Then John Suiter Jones had a furniture store. There's another hardware store that later came in. I can't remember his name. A guy named Taylor. Taylor, wasn't that right?

Fred Latham: He's got a son named Clarence.

MR. MCSORLEY: Clarence. I tried to tell Lil. All I could remember was Taylor.

LIL MCSORLEY: I had no idea who he was.

MR. MCSORLEY: Then the donut shop. Olin Wright later had a donut shop there. And John Whitty if you knew John Whitty he had

some wonderful remarks. I remember we used to go up there for coffee in a morning break and John Mitchell and John Whitty and Gus Mann and some of the fellows that worked in that area and we'd always go and have coffee mid-morning. And I remember that Olin Wright - did you all know Olin?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MR. MCSORLEY: He was a wonderful person. He lost both of his legs in a train accident. John Whitty said Olie, how many urns of coffee do you sell a day? Oh, he said, about three, three or four. Said you want to double it? I can tell you how to do it. He came and got right close to him and said yeah, John how would I do it? Said fill up the cups. (Laughter) He was great, John Whitty.

LIL MCSORLEY: John was a real character.

MR. MCSORLEY: Just fill up the cups. But after that was Sam Lipman & Sons.

LIL MCSORLEY: Are you old enough to remember when it was Sam Lipman's?

DR. PATTERSON: Furniture?

LIL MCSORLEY: No, no Sam Lipman's Department Store, clothing store?

MR. MCSORLEY: No, not furniture, clothing.

DR. PATTERSON: Clothing store.

MR. MCSORLEY: Joe Lipman was the furniture. Sam Lipman was clothing.

LIL MCSORLEY: The reason why I remember Sam Lipman was because

when I was five years old I knew how to do the Charleston and we would go down to Sam Lipman's store, clothing store which was on that corner and Mr. Harry Lipman would stand me on the counter and give me a nickel to do the Charleston. That's why I remember that store before they moved up the street.

MR. MCSORLEY: Later it became Dowdy Furniture Company.

DR. PATTERSON: Will Dowdy?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah when Sam moved out. Then after that it was the A&P.

LIL MCSORLEY: You remember when it was A&P don't you?

DR. PATTERSON: Un-huh.

MR. MCSORLEY: Now let's see, you want to know the north side of this street.

DR. PATTERSON: Starting back at Craven Street.

MR. MCSORLEY: Starting back at Craven. There was a house on the corner and I don't remember who lived in that house but I know that then that was torn down. Then the next one to it was Papa Dick Williams, Amy and Betsy Williams' father.

DR. PATTERSON: Is that where they lived?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah, that house next to the corner. It was a wooden house there. But I'm getting away from myself. On that corner building that was a service station, there were some people that moved in here and they were in the salvage business. They were Cohens. They didn't stay here too long but they had a business in there of some type. Let's see now, next to that, I didn't know what was in

that building. Next to it if you remember there was an alley that went through there and a brick building.

DR. PATTERSON: Now we're talking about next to the Williams house?

MR. MCSORLEY: Next to the Williams house going that way there was a, I don't know what it was but that was torn down. But if you remember this alley way that went through there.

Fred Latham: That alley's still there next to the Heilig-Levine building.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's correct, Heilig-Levine. Well in that building I don't remember what was in that structure but anyway they tore it down. Then the Heilig-Levine building.

LIL MCSORLEY: Well didn't Sam Roach have a garage?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah I was going to tell them. In that building that she's talking about Sam Roach had his auto parts business there. New Bern Auto Supply was in that building. Then Heilig-Levine took over the whole building. Next to that was a real small structure that was an ABC store.

LIL MCSORLEY: Is now I think.

MR. MCSORLEY: Right. Let's see now. Where that ABC store is and where the other building was Mr. Nick Bray and it may have been the person you were talking about had a car business there. One of the things that I remember about that car business, one of them, they sold Franklins. Franklins if you remember was an air cool vehicle. It didn't have a radiator. That was all in there. Then I'm trying

to think of, then that little building right, I'm talking about next to the corner now, there was I think it was a Western Auto that was on the lower floor. The corner building of course was Duffy's Drugstore.

LIL MCSORLEY: Facing Middle Street.

MR. MCSORLEY: But that faced Middle Street. Oh there was something I should have pointed out. Right across from Craven Foundry where I told you that Wallace Holton was there, I do remember who was first there. Seashore Transportation Company had their repair shop there.

DR. PATTERSON: Across from Craven Foundry?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah. You know I told you it was Wallace Holton and later became Eastern Engines. But before Wallace Holton I remember it was the bus company repair station. And who was in charge of it? Shoot Hall.

LIL MCSORLEY: Was he in charge of it?

MR. MCSORLEY: He was overseer of most anything.

LIL MCSORLEY: Working with Mr. West.

MR. MCSORLEY: So that just covers that side of the street.

DR. PATTERSON: What else do you have down there, Gene?

MR. MCSORLEY: I believe we've covered everything, haven't we? I've covered both sides of South Front Street from East Front to Middle. We've covered both sides of Craven Street from Pollock to the river, haven't we?

DR. PATTERSON: Gene, you have done a super job in describing

all of this and it's been hard for you with this surgery yesterday on your back and I know that this is bothering you but let me just ask you to comment on one other thing. You've shown us some great pictures of the hurricanes in 1955 and what happened on South Front Street. Would you talk about that for just a little bit?

MR. MCSORLEY: Could I go back a few years say to 1933 and tell you about that one?

DR. PATTERSON: I'd forgotten how old you were.

MR. MCSORLEY: I'll be ninety-seven one of these birthdays.
(Laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Go right ahead.

MR. MCSORLEY: But anyway in 1933 when we had that first great blow that washed the Neuse River bridge out we thought, the Union Point boys thought that was one of the finest things that had ever happened. Of course, at that time the Barbour Boat Works was making boats and they were using juniper boards. The juniper boards went from sixteen to eighteen to twenty feet long. Naturally when the water came in the boards decided they would take a little visit and they floated all around. And so that morning we got out to check it out. We got on those boards. We got us a pole and we poled all over the place on juniper boards and a stick that we had found. We thought that was great.

LIL MCSORLEY: How deep was the water when that hurricane came through?

MR. MCSORLEY: The water came up to South Front Street right

across from where we lived. Those houses on that side were built up in case of a storm but the other houses were flooded. But it never got up high enough other than just across the street up on the sidewalks on our side. Now on the Craven Street side...

DR. PATTERSON: This is 1933?

MR. MCSORLEY: 1933. It flooded on up into the Craven Street. But that was the main memories I have of that storm that we had a good time on those boards.

DR. PATTERSON: Straddling the juniper boards and poling around.

MR. MCSORLEY: Naw standing on them! You didn't straddle them. You stood up on those things, Man. Just like a surf board.

LIL MCSORLEY: And they'd hold you, they'd float?

MR. MCSORLEY: Sure they floated with you. Ask Johnny Mitchell about that. But now the three storms in 1955, they were tough. At that time I was with Craven Foundry Machine Company and we had counters on the automotive side, counters were about four feet high, and water came in the building and it flooded, went over the counters. I remember that we had a Coca Cola drink machine in there and a bunch of us got together and lifted that thing and put it up on the counter. That was shorted out, I mean it got wet. It wasn't hooked up, didn't short out really but that flooded into that, in the lower part of that box. And I will recall that during that time there was quite a little activity. People were concerned, traveling. Matter of fact they had outboard motors running up and down the streets in those things. I'll never forget while we were working at that time the water coming

in, we just worked all night. I'll never forget one of the fellows came running in the building there and said where's your restroom. Right there in the back. Of course, I'm sure the water was up to his chest if he sat down but that was alright. Anyhow, it was a devastating event with the damage that was done all down South Front Street and up Middle and almost, maybe not quite half way up Craven to Pollock but it was almost. It was up to where Coleman's used car lot was and that was a little beyond...

Fred Latham: Devastated Mack Lupton's Freezer.

MR. MCSORLEY: Absolutely. It did. Right.

LIL MCSORLEY: And it was right after that hurricane that Craven Foundry built that upstairs office.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right, elevated it.

LIL MCSORLEY: They had papers and all that kind of stuff that was destroyed.

MR. MCSORLEY: We moved everything that we could but that water, I mean that stuff started - and one of the tragedies of the thing, the water coming in slow but when it starts out, Man that's when the structural damage is done. Just swish! Goes out a lot faster than it comes in.

DR. PATTERSON: Gene were you working in that area when the Gaston Hotel burned down?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: You remember that fire?

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: What do you remember about it?

MR. MCSORLEY: Well other than it was just a terrible fire...

LIL MCSORLEY: You know I heard all kinds of tales about that fire that when it started that, you may have heard the same thing, that it started in the wiring is what I heard and Mrs. Lawrence lived there, David Lawrence's mother. There was any number of I presume they were widows who lived at the hotel, you know had a room. They sent word up to them that there was a little fire but not to be alarmed that it was really nothing. And didn't that just go on for hours and they finally all came and sat down in the lobby. The people who lived there in the hotel sat in the lobby. Did you ever hear that? Then finally the thing just really, it was in the walls, wasn't it?

MR. MCSORLEY: Once it started spreading upstairs...

Fred Latham: I've got a series of slides that I took during this time.

LIL MCSORLEY: You have?

Fred Latham: Of the fire.

LIL MCSORLEY: Did you ever hear that about people taking it easy you know, that they were not all that concerned when they found out that the fire had started?

DR. PATTERSON: I hadn't heard that. My mother was one of the people living there.

LIL MCSORLEY: Was she?

DR. PATTERSON: She was called and told to get out. She went into the hall and it was so filled with smoke she didn't know where

she was and she crawled along and knocked on the doors to try to call someone and nobody was there. She finally got out on the little porch over the entrance. The firemen saw her in her nightgown and carried her down the ladder.

LIL MCSORLEY: My goodness! So this was at night wasn't it? Did Mrs. Lawrence live there too? You know who I'm talking about.

DR. PATTERSON: I don't know.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yes she did.

LIL MCSORLEY: At the same time I believe. But of course you know you hear all kinds of things.

DR. PATTERSON: Were many businesses destroyed along there by the fire?

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: Braddy's Laundry.

MR. MCSORLEY: All of them were really damaged and most of it had to be repaired or torn down. At that time I was with Craven Foundry and had one of the salesmen that was calling on us from one of the manufacturers was spending the night there and he had to go out the back way. So he said that was the John Brown thing I've ever heard of. Said nobody seemed to be worried about the situation. Said the next thing I knew I couldn't get out the building. Said I had to get what I could together and go out over this little back stoop thing and he said if you recall how that thing dropped off in the back of that building, he said they had to get ladders up there to get us out. That was the only eyewitness report that I had.

LIL MCSORLEY: It must have been smoldering for a long, long time. I didn't realize that your mother was there.

MR. MCSORLEY: I didn't either.

LIL MCSORLEY: I knew there were several widows though.

DR. PATTERSON: She lost everything she had except the nightgown she was wearing. If you can remember the hurricane of 1933 you can remember the Depression years in New Bern too.

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: Was that a tough time for New Bern?

MR. MCSORLEY: I would say not particularly. In some places, not for me, but it was for a lot of people. One of the things that I realize, that during that Depression it was a sort of an equalizer. Everybody was treated the same way. I mean it just, you know, those that had more lost it. That's all it was to it. But, being nobody had anything after that it was sort of everybody helping somebody else in that vein.

LIL MCSORLEY: And you didn't try to keep up with the Joneses.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right.

LIL MCSORLEY: Because the Joneses didn't have anything.

MR. MCSORLEY: It didn't make any difference. It was a time that, now the farmers they fared perhaps better than anybody else from the standpoint they didn't have to worry about food and so forth.

LIL MCSORLEY: And don't you remember, you said you were working, the manager, Economy Auto Supply before he went to Craven Foundry, and you'd go out to collect and they would pay Gene with eggs.

MR. MCSORLEY: I was going to tell you that they'd offer to pay you with...

Fred Latham: Barter.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah, sure the barter system. You know everything was, you couldn't believe the prices. For an example, a Coca Cola was a nickel. That's the highest price increase that I've known. That's ten times now at the lowest dollar price that you can buy a coke is fifty cents that I know of. Back then it was a nickel.

LIL MCSORLEY: We lived out in Ghent then. We moved out to Ghent in 1929. Nearly everybody out in Ghent had a little garden in their backyard. We had chickens and a garden. Of course, daddy was fortunate. He always had a job. I mean he worked for the Sun Journal. Of course now if they didn't collect for their ads the people who worked at the Sun Journal didn't get paid either. When Mr. and Mrs. Dawson had the Sun Journal is when daddy came to New Bern. Then Mr. Challen and all of them bought it. Then he worked over at Owen Dunn. So he always had a job and we were not as bad off as maybe a lot of other people were. But everybody in our neighborhood had a little garden and chickens in the backyard out in Ghent, all up and down our block.

DR. PATTERSON: Lil, what was your maiden name?

LIL MCSORLEY: Jones. But not a New Bern Jones. We moved here in 1922 but daddy's family is from Wake County. It's a good common name, Jones.

DR. PATTERSON: That's a good way to remember the fire in 1922

- and Lil moving to town.

LIL MCSORLEY: That's right.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right. (Laughter)

LIL MCSORLEY: I don't really remember any of that but daddy said we moved here I believe we came to New Bern I think he said the day after the great fire.

MR. MCSORLEY: I'm going to tell you one situation that was a result of the Depression. It was supply and demand. How free trade works. You know everything, the dollar just dropped and it was hard to come back. In 1936 I went to Morton Motor Company to talk to them about some tires and items. The salesman there at the time said hey, Mack, don't you need a car. I said well, I haven't got one but I've got the company's. Said no, said really, I've got a car that I'd like to sell you. I said well, it depends. What do you mean? I said oh I don't know whether I can afford it or not. He says well, come back here and take a look at it. And it was a Model-A Ford, 1931 Model-A Ford. So I said well, it looks like it's in pretty good shape. What will you take for it? He says I have a labor lien against it and the guy can't reclaim it. Said I'll sell it to you for labor lien. I said how much is that. He said twelve dollars and fifty cents.

LIL MCSORLEY: Can you believe that?

MR. MCSORLEY: Can you imagine that? And I bought a Model-A Ford, 1931 model, that scoundrel wasn't but five years old. I bought it for twelve dollars. We had more fun with that car than you can

shake a stick at. Gasoline was nineteen cents a gallon.

DR. PATTERSON: You have just been to a doctor here in town. Would you care to comment on the cost of medical care now compared to then?

MR. MCSORLEY: Compared. According to a recent treatment that I had as compared to ones back in say 1939 or 1935 or 1930 or whatever, the office visit was back then at Dr. Ashford's, the office visit was three dollars. Today the office visit is twenty-nine something.

I can look on there and be sure. For minor surgery Dr. Ashford charged a little more than that. For cutting your foot open and for him to treat it and sew it up he charged you five dollars for that. I just had a little place on my back that was sewed up and the bill was a reasonable bill for only four hundred and ninety-six dollars. So I don't know what the ratio would be but it's unbelievable.

LIL MCSORLEY: You know what was so interesting to me to or what is so interesting is the fact that the doctor did everything. He was a surgeon. You know your father was a surgeon. I mean they did everything. If you had a cold and you were sick you went and they treated that. They did all the surgery. They did everything. It was not specialized then, do you think Joe Pat, at all like it is now?

DR. PATTERSON: No. The next generations came along and they were reasonably specialized. When you look at my generation in town, the surgeons were doing every type of surgery imaginable. So they were general practitioners in surgery. Then the next generation took

up the sub specialties as their livelihood. So every generation gets narrower and narrower.

Gene, this has been a super interview with you and Lil. I think we've made you talk enough but before we stop let me ask if you have any special stories that you'd like to tell that you haven't told us.

MR. MCSORLEY: I'll tell you one that we'll probably go to the penitentiary over. Frances Meadows and Tootsie Mitchell and Virginia McSorley and Mary Nunn and some of their friends had a party and it was held at the Meadows' home. We were left out and we knew they were going to have good refreshments and we thought that was terrible.

So we peeked in the windows. The house if you recall is reasonably high off the ground, Ed Meadows' house. So they were having such a good time dancing and carrying on in there that we thought we'd put an end to that. So we hooked up the garden hose and one of the boys, two of them, pushed us up so we could stand on the edge, passed us the hose and we ran it through the window and the hosed down their living room. (Laughter)

LIL MCSORLEY: Isn't that awful?

DR. PATTERSON: You hosed down what?

MR. MCSORLEY: The whole room. I mean just flooded the floor. Well, the boys didn't seem to like that. They came out to challenge us but of course by the time they got out there was a vacancy there. You couldn't be found.

LIL MCSORLEY: That was Bucky and Ecky and you and ...

MR. MCSORLEY: ...me and John Mitchell and Andrew Fuller. So the next day it seems that somehow or another that information was revealed to our parents. You talking about temporal punishment.

LIL MCSORLEY: And poor Mrs. Meadows, her house all ruined.

MR. MCSORLEY: We suffered.

DR. PATTERSON: I don't know why.

MR. MCSORLEY: I can't imagine why. And I can recall after the first initiation of that punishment my father started out and he said you see that fence? Yessir. Stay on this side of it. If anybody comes to talk to you, tell them you can't talk to them. I said how long daddy? I'll let you know. I stayed that way two months. Solitary confinement. (Laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: You didn't talk for two months?

MR. MCSORLEY: Oh that's a lie, I did but... (Laughter) That was unh...

DR. PATTERSON: Any other stories?

MR. MCSORLEY: That's about enough. (Laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: I think you really ought to stop.

MR. MCSORLEY: I think so too.

DR. PATTERSON: You're getting in deeper and deeper and deeper.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's terrible. Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: This is why I was always afraid to go down to South Front Street.

MR. MCSORLEY: I don't blame you.

LIL MCSORLEY: I don't blame you with that crowd down there.

MR. MCSORLEY: Isn't that awful?

DR. PATTERSON: Gene, I know that you have more and more memories that would be wonderful to talk about but I really think that we've made you work enough. I want to thank you for letting us come.

MR. MCSORLEY: It was my pleasure.

DR. PATTERSON: Well it has been really fun for Fred and myself to be here and to listen to you and the Memories program appreciates this a lot. So I'll shut this...

MR. MCSORLEY: I'll tell you, before you shut it off, I'd like to offer ya'll some sort of coke or coffee but I'm not going to offer because I'm afraid you'll accept.

DR. PATTERSON: Do you want this on the tape do you? (Laughter)

LIL MCSORLEY: To show you how hospitable he is.

DR. PATTERSON: Thanks for the thought Gene.

MR. MCSORLEY: Would you like a cup of coffee?

DR. PATTERSON: And I'll close this now and I'll go home and get some coffee. (Laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: ...from Gene.

GM: Bucky Meadows, he was one of the best friends that we had. Bucky would try anything. So one day we decided that it was a certain tree in back of the house that we hadn't explored and it would be difficult to get to the first limb. But Bucky said oh, I can do that. So up the tree he goes. He gets up about two-thirds of the way to the second level of the limb. He was up about twenty feet I imagine. He lost his footing and down he came. Well, he couldn't get up so

the boys being nice friends that we were, we helped him up and we carried him up to the house to the front door and knocked on the door and Miss Ella, his mother, came to the door and we said Miss Ella, here's Bucky. (Laughter) Old Bucky, still groggy, and they found out he had a broken collarbone and some hip injuries of some type. But we were nice, thoughtful and carried him.

DR. PATTERSON: You just dropped him there and left.

MR. MCSORLEY: Said here's Bucky.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, I might put the final footnote to that. Bucky was killed in World War II in a plane crash in the Air Force.

MR. MCSORLEY: That's right, certainly was.

DR. PATTERSON: Bucky was a fine, gentle person.

MR. MCSORLEY: He really was.

DR. PATTERSON: Nice guy.

MR. MCSORLEY: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: Do you think he has any other stories, Lil?

LIL MCSORLEY: Probably a hundred, but right off hand...

MR. MCSORLEY: I don't believe I'll tell them.

DR. PATTERSON: Alright I'll shut it off again.

END OF INTERVIEW

