

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

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INTERVIEW 1507.2

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN
Tape Number 1507.2 - Town Life memories of W.J. Edwards
Dates covered 1939 through about 1978

This tape was prepared for the Memories of New Bern Committee, Town Life Task Force and takes the form of a monologue prepared in New Bern, N.C. on February 24, 1993 (at least started on that date).

It is a tape recounting the memories of William Joseph "Bill" Edwards of New Bern. This tape is designated tape No. 1507.2 and is the second tape prepared by Bill Edwards for the Memories of New Bern Committee; the first being Tape No. 1507 prepared for the Transportation Task Force.

I was born in Sanford, North Carolina on March 5, 1919, the second son of Harry Powell Edwards and May Cross Edwards. I have one brother, Winslow M. Edwards who also lives in New Bern. I was named after my paternal grandfather, William J. Edwards, who was one of the founders of Sanford. His wife, my grandmother, lived in New Bern as a child and attended the New Bern Academy in the old academy building on New Street, which now (1993) functions as a museum.

I attended Sanford High School through my junior year when I moved to Raleigh with my family and graduated from Needham Broughton High School in Raleigh in 1937. Upon graduation from high school I entered N. C. State University (then N. C. State College) in Chemical Engineering.

My family had moved to Morehead City in September 1939 when my father and uncle, Edward R. Buchan, began operating the Atlantic & North Carolina Railroad under a lease from the state of North Carolina.

The family moved to New Bern later that year when the railroad

operating office was moved to New Bern and the accounting office to Kinston. The family moved into what was then the Carrie Duffy Ward house on Spencer Avenue. The W. F. Ward family lived next door and I became good friends with the Ward boys; Alfred, William, and Kennedy, although they were all younger than I.

On weekends and during summer vacation I visited New Bern as often as I could and met some great New Bern people. One of the first of those people was Bob Shipp who very kindly introduced me to the young society of New Bern. One of the people who particularly held my attention was Rosa Willis whom I dated often when I was home from college. I remember her sister, Lilly, also and the good times we all had dancing at the Beacon. There I met Celia Willis, Ray Henderson and a number of other young people whose names have long since left my memory. Later I met Frances Osborn, who is now Mrs. Ray Henderson.

Several of us used to meet at the Gaston Hotel (later Governor Tryon) with Emma Duffy Blades and some of her friends for more dancing.

If I remember correctly, Emma Duffy's father owned the hotel. These happy days continued until July 1941.

Since I was a member of the ROTC unit at N. C. State, I was called into active service in July 1941 before graduation and served until September 1943; serving in the infantry at Camp Clairborne Louisiana; Phoenix, Arizona, and finally out from Camp Van Dorn Mississippi.

While stationed in Louisiana, I was sent to the Officers Training School at Fort Benning, Georgia. One bright sunshiny December day, several of we officers were outside our barracks at Fort Benning helping a fellow officer wash his car and listening to big band music on his

car radio. Suddenly the program was interrupted for an important news broadcast and we then heard President Roosevelt announcing the "dastardly" attack on Pearl Harbor. The day was December 7th, 1941.

It was two days later before my sweetheart, Kathryn McLeod from Dunn, was able to reach me by phone. Kitty, as I called her, and I had met when I was at N. C. State and she was attending Woman's College in Greensboro. She announced that she was coming to Fort Benning to see me within a week, and a week later Kitty arrived accompanied by my mother and brother. That night Kitty and I decided to get married, and about a month and a half later on February 7, 1942 we were married in the Episcopal church in nearby Columbus, Georgia.

We were much more fortunate than most young service couples, because rather than going overseas I was assigned to a regiment that never went overseas and Kitty stayed with me for the rest of my Army tour.

Soon after returning to New Bern in 1943, I went to work at the water treatment plant at the Marine Corps Air Station at Cherry Point, but having little work to do there, I left for a job in Kinston running a concrete block plant.

We had our first child, Patsy, when we moved to Kinston and thoroughly enjoyed our stay in Kinston and the good friends we had made there. After about a year, I learned that the A&EC Railroad was going fully to diesel power and so we moved back to New Bern and I enrolled in a special diesel maintenance course at N. C. State. Another special two week course at the Electromotive (General Motors) diesel-electric plant in LaGrange, Illinois made me think I was fully

prepared to maintain locomotives on the A&EC; was I in for a surprise!

So, I went to work in the New Bern shop as a diesel mechanic, where I worked until about 1950. During that period, my wife and I lived in a garage apartment behind my parent's home at the corner of National Avenue and Avenue D, and there our second child, Kathryn, was born. We lived in that apartment a couple of years then moved into a house next door to my parent's home on National Avenue; a house that Bennie and Della Baxter had built and lived in for several years before moving to DeGraffenreid Park.

My wife and I joined Christ Episcopal Church when we returned to New Bern in 1946. Rev. Charles Williams was rector when we joined, and he gave us the instruction necessary for us to become Episcopalians.

Rev. Williams used the Catholic religion as one extreme and the Baptists as the other in telling us what Episcopalians believe. I had been a Catholic and my wife a Baptist.

My wife's time was taken up in rearing two, then three children, but I became deeply involved in church activities; singing in the choir, teaching Sunday School, and eventually serving on the vestry. Also on the vestry at that time were Ed Hancock, Charles Midyette, Dr. Charles Ashford, Sr., and Libby Ward. Myrtle West was directing the choir when I joined it. Bozzie Boswell and I carried the bass section of the choir. I don't remember who other members were.

While I was a member of the vestry, Rev. Williams announced his retirement and we began a search for a new rector. This search led us to call Rev. C. Edward Sharpe, who then served Christ Church as a fine rector and pastor until his retirement in April 1991. Ed,

Virginia, and their family became our close friends, and in 1974 became our neighbors as well.

About 1950, I took the job of New Bern freight agent for the railroad. My experiences with the railroad are fully described on another tape -- Number 1507.

In 1952 our third child, William J., Jr., was born, the third of our children to be born at St. Luke's Hospital. It was also about this time that my association with the railroad led to a serious accident to my older daughter Patsy.

I had brought a track jack home to use in raising our garage high enough above the ground to put it on a concrete block foundation. Since I could only work on this project during my spare time, I left the jack in the garage thinking no one would try to use this large, heavy tool in my absence. This experience taught me never to overlook childhood curiosity.

The jack, weighing about 35 pounds, was designed to lift a section of railroad track so that it could be moved readily or so a new cross tie could be slid under the track. In order that such a move could be made quickly, the jack had a trip mechanism that would allow the jack to be released in one motion rather than to be "jacked down."

Patsy and a neighborhood playmate were playing with the jack, jacking it up and down, when the playmate discovered the trip lever and tripped the jack causing it to fall on Patsy's finger, which, childlike, she had stuck inside the jack.

My wife called me at work and told me what had happened, so I rushed home, took one look at the finger and rushed her to Dr. Wadsworth,

our family doctor. Dr. Wadsworth took a look and said, "This is something I am not prepared to handle. I recommend that you take her to one of the Patterson boys (Simmons and Joe Pat) who have just returned to New Bern to practice surgery." He called the Patterson's office and told them what to expect, so Simmons was waiting for me when I arrived a few minutes later in their office above Clark's Drug Store.

The jack had all but severed Patsy's forefinger and had broken the bone in two places.

We immediately took her to St. Luke's Hospital where Simmons repaired the finger as best he could and placed it in a special "Simmons Made" traction cast fashioned from plaster, a coat hanger and rubber bands. The finger was saved but remains curved, which according to Patsy, makes her particularly adept at knitting. I will never forget Dr. Wadsworth for recognizing his own limitations, nor Simmons Patterson for saving the finger, curved though it may be.

My job as freight agent ushered me into the civic life of New Bern which thoroughly involved and fascinated me for the next forty-three years -- so far. My civic involvement has slowed considerably since my retirement in 1985, but I am still very much interested in and still somewhat involved in New Bern's civic affairs.

When I took the job as New Bern freight agent, Cecil King had his Schlitz Beer distributorship office across the hall from my office in the old freight warehouse on the shore of Trent River at the foot of Hancock Street. The beer was stored in the back half of the warehouse which we didn't use.

My office crew consisted of Verona Zeigler, cashier, who later

operated the Zeigler Motel; Kathleen Brinson; and Clara Robinson, wife of the A&EC Railroad maintenance chief; and James Brown, warehouseman.

Sue Pittman was secretary/bookkeeper for Cecil King. The close quarters made us almost like a family, so we all became good friends.

Soon after becoming freight agent, I joined the New Bern Jaycees and met with them every week at the Club Diamond upstairs over Mack Lupton's freezer plant that was located about midway between Middle and Craven Streets, behind the Gaston Hotel. There I met Gene McSorley who became and has remained a close friend ever since. Memories of Jaycee projects have faded but I remember that we were an active group.

When I aged out of Jaycees, Clyde Rice, Sr., who had come to New Bern a couple of years earlier to operate a modified wholesale grocery company, took me with him to a Lion's Club meeting and I joined the following week, thinking that my association with the Lion's Club members would help the railroad freight business. Little did I know what a rewarding experience that would turn out to be and how many friends I would make there. Many names have faded from memory but some of those I recall include Clyde Rice and Cecil King of course, Nat Baxter, Bob Cotten, Sr., Lloyd Lane, Albert Willis, Paul Cox, Norris Reed, and Guy Hamilton, Sr.

The Lion's Club was meeting then at Hamilton's Cafe owned by Guy Hamilton, Sr. This cafe was located on the east side of George Street immediately beside the wooden bridge that carried US-70 traffic across the Trent River; an unusual bridge that took a decided curve about halfway across the river. This was one of the few bridges I know of that had a curve in it.

Cecil King, who later became president of the Chamber of Commerce and still later mayor of New Bern, was a retired Marine and was quite a talented singer. So during Christmas week, probably of 1951, he coaxed Bob Cotten, Lloyd Lane, and myself to join him in singing a couple of Christmas carols for the club. We placed a few candles on the table in front of the four of us and by candlelight sang "Silent Night" and "Jingle Bells" in barbershop harmony.

This little song fest probably sowed the seed for the Lions/Rotary minstrel which the two clubs put on a couple of years later. We put on a show for wounded Marines (Korean War, as I remember) in the base hospital at Camp LeJeune, a show in Morehead City, then two shows in New Bern at the Ghent School Auditorium, I think.

Bob Cotten, Lloyd Lane and I sang in the chorus which was directed by Cecil King. I remember singing solo a chorus from "Swing Low - Sweet Chariot", one of two solo parts in my lifetime. Albert Willis was outstanding as Mr. Interlocutor. Cedric Boyd, then New Bern's director of public works, dressed as a blond floozie and sang "Rag Mop" while he played on his "Guitoilet" a toilet seat with strings.

Dentist Dr. Joe Anderson and a couple of others put on a skit centered around "Hizumtism Juice" or Craven County Corn. George Arrington, who was then executive secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, gave a skit as a preacher trying to coax "coin of the realm" from his faithful flock. This was a money raising event for both clubs and was not only very successful financially, it was great fun.

This event led me into Chamber of Commerce activities and eventually to membership on the Chamber Board of Directors.

The chamber held, and still holds, an annual meeting each year at which a report of past year activities is made to the chamber membership and awards are given for outstanding contributions to chamber projects. The meeting is always opened by a keynote speaker, and for my first annual meeting I think that speaker was David Brinkley who was then anchor on the Huntley/Brinkley Report, a TV news show. David was a big hit with the members at this banquet.

He was born in Wilmington but moved to New Bern as a young boy and had bagged groceries at the A&P store that once stood on the southeast corner of Middle Street and South Front Street (now Tryon Palace Drive).

The Chamber at that time, and for several years later, acted as the industrial development agency for New Bern. About the time I became active in the Chamber, we learned that Union Bag Paper Company was interested in locating a paper mill at New Bern and they asked the Chamber of Commerce to assist them in buying property for the proposed mill.

The A&EC Railroad was of course interested in locating the mill in New Bern; not only because of the tremendous amount of freight it would generate for the railroad, but for the economic impact it would have on the entire area. So, my father had the private car Carolina placed on a siding at Clark's to serve as an office from which the property acquisition effort would operate. This location was close to the proposed site of the paper mill.

George Arrington organized the property acquisition project and was ably assisted by a number of chamber members. The names of all

of those involved evade my memory, but I am sure that Guy Hamilton, Sr., H. K. Land, Cecil King, and I think Olin Wright, George Scott, and G. C. Honeycutt were also active in the project. Considerable resistance was encountered with the land owners (understandably) who were reluctant to sell land that had been handed down through several generations. The group had to assure the owners that they would be moved at Union Bag expense to a desirable location away from the site.

This assurance included moving a couple of houses, and a special act of the legislature would be necessary to allow the houses to be moved.

Near the peak of this activity and out in the field, George Arrington was struck with a severe headache and nausea, so severe that he was quickly carried to St. Luke's Hospital where it was determined that he had suffered a severe cerebral hemorrhage. He lived less than an hour after arriving at the hospital.

George's death temporarily halted the property acquisition but it was soon resumed and all of the targeted property was acquired.

Several chamber members, including myself, and Olin Wright, who had taken George Arrington's place as executive secretary of the Chamber, went to Raleigh to seek authority to move one of the houses to its new location. We first met with the Secretary of the Department of Transportation and were told that he could not give such authority, that only a special bill from the legislature would allow such a move.

He offered little hope that we could get such a bill passed. But we went to see Sam Whitehurst, who was then representative for Craven County, to seek his assistance. He readily agreed to introduce a bill authorizing the move, did so the next day, and the bill was passed.

Union Bag was so appreciative of our help that they invited all of the crew (25 to 30 people) who had helped, to a weekend at their camp on an island off the coast of South Carolina. This facility was located on a bluff overlooking a body of water (a river, I think), and the main building was laid out much like a motel with possibly 20 to 30 rooms, most with twin beds. Albert "Scrappy" Bell and I shared one of these rooms. A large dining/meeting room accommodated the whole group for meals. A shuffle board court just out front occupied many of us who had never played the game before. Trap shooting was offered off the dock that extended out over the river. And I found that if I had to depend on pigeons - clay in this case - for food, I would soon starve.

We arrived on Friday and were offered an opportunity to hunt the next day. We had two choices; deer or turkey. A companion and I (I don't remember who) chose to hunt turkey, so we were taken in the dark the next morning to a blind and told to remain absolutely quiet until at least an hour after sunrise. We remained quiet as directed but saw no turkeys, though a deer came to within 25 feet of where we were waiting. Not wanting to waste a chance at a turkey, we did not risk a shot at the deer. On returning to camp, we learned that the deer hunting party had seen a deer but several shots had failed to bring him down, so they returned meatless.

At dinner that evening one of the deer hunters rose and called for the attention of the group. When the group's attention was focussed on the speaker, he related a tale of how a deer had run within 50 feet of the hunters and had survived a barrage of lead without slackening

his pace. He said that the principal shooter was Olin Wright and proposed that the time honored tradition of amputation of the shirttail of the hapless hunter be executed. Olin strongly denied that

the deer came within the range of his rifle and insisted that someone else must have done the shooting. One of the hunters picked up Olin's rifle, smelled the barrel and declared that the rifle had been fired.

This proved to be sufficient evidence for the blood hungry group to convict the helpless victim. So G. C. Honeycutt, I think, executed the amputation. Being the good sport he was, Olin accepted the punishment without further protest, accompanied by the hilarious enjoyment of the group. Only much later did I learn that Olin's shirt was brand new and had been worn that evening for the first time.

Another story that brought considerable merriment to the group was one told by Scrapy Bell describing his trip down from New Bern with George Ipock, then chairman of the Craven County commissioners.

It seemed that George had just prior to the trip bought a Ford Thunderbird. This was one of the first ones that was built as a sports car with bucket seats and leg room for a midget. Since Scrapy was a husky six footer, he had considerable trouble getting comfortable during the five hour ride and he did not spare his hosts feelings about how he felt. So George invited him to seek a ride back with someone else. Scrapy promptly accepted the invitation.

As it turned out, we learned some time later that Union Bag had merged with the Camp Paper Company who had a paper mill in Franklin, Virginia, making it necessary to build the plant in New Bern.

This property acquisition team worked so well that they did not

want to stop. New Bern is fortunate that they took this attitude, because Stanley Power Tools (now Bosch), Texfi (now Amatayl) and Ethyl Products (now Treadegar Film Products), this was New Bern and Craven County's first industrial park.

Since this is my story, I take the liberty to diverge for a few moments to tell a few of my memories of Olin Wright.

It seems that Olin had worked in the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad maintenance shop in Florence, South Carolina for several years until one dark night a locomotive was backing out of the roundhouse across the turntable as Olin was walking away from the shop on the same track.

Since the locomotive was moving very slowly it made little noise, and Olin failed to hear it coming and thus had his feet run over by the locomotive. As soon as he could be safely transported he was transferred to the Atlantic Coast Line hospital in Rocky Mount where the effort to save his legs failed, so both were amputated just below the knee.

As Olin tells it, he was quite bitter and despondent after the accident and decided that he would be useless from then on. One day a close friend came in to see him and after listening to Olin's despondent talk for a short time, got up and as he was preparing to leave, handed Olin a tin cup, saying, "Here, you're going to need this when you're sitting on the street corner begging." Olin says he threw the cup at his "former friend" and told him to get out. That incident started him to thinking however, and from that moment he vowed he would walk and would never use that cup. This vow stood him in good stead, because in learning to walk with artificial legs, he fell many times

but refused to give up.

I first met him some time later when he came to New Bern to open a doughnut shop in the Governor Tryon Hotel, a place that had become a hangout for many of New Bern's downtown business people; attracted there by Olin's bright and indomitable outlook. This led to his employment as assistant to George Arrington in running the Chamber of Commerce. He took charge after George's death and did an outstanding job until he retired a good many years later.

Olin loved to hunt and one of his hunting partners was often Guy Hamilton, Sr. One bitter cold day, Olin and Guy were out in a boat that served as a duck blind. Guy complained several times that his feet were about to freeze and finally turned to Olin and said, "Aren't your feet cold?" Olin nonchalantly said, "No, my feet aren't cold at all." This startled Guy until the light dawned. He turned to Olin and said, "Aw, you son-of-a-bitch, you ain't got no feet." This brought hilarious laughter from Olin.

I have often heard Olin say, "I would like to have a rattlesnake bite me just to see the expression on his face." This was Olin's indomitable good nature. When I would occasionally feel sorry for myself, I would go by the chamber office and after talking with Olin for a while, think, "If a man with no legs can have an attitude like his, what do I have to complain about?" I never failed to feel better after a talk with Olin.

Olin almost single handedly persuaded Stanley Power Tools to locate in New Bern, often spending his own money to entertain Stanley executives. Certainly Olin was ably assisted by chamber members, but

his leadership also brought into New Bern's industrial fold; Texfi, Hatteras Yachts, and Weyerhaeuser.

For many years Miss Gertrude Carraway had been a writer for various New Bern and North Carolina publications and took every opportunity to promote the restoration of Tryon Palace. She was elected Secretary General of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and that office increased her influence in historic circles.

Gertrude's persistence and influence, coupled with Maude Moore Latham's love for her hometown of New Bern, prompted Mrs. Latham to make a large bequest that led to restoration of Tryon Palace beginning in 1952. Mrs. John A. Kellenberger, Mrs. Latham's daughter, was the first president of the Tryon Palace Commission and she and her husband acted as executors of Mrs. Latham's estate, ably leading the restoration project to a successful completion in 1959.

I remember when I came to New Bern, the stable was all that was left of Tryon Palace. It had remained in its original location on the west side of George Street but had been converted into a two-family apartment. George Street at that time went through the site where the main building of the Palace now sits and continued on to and across the old wooden Trent River bridge.

About 1954, as well as I can determine, Cecil King's second term as president of the chamber was coming to an end and he announced to the board that he would not be a candidate for a third term. Dan Roberts, who operated a Chrysler/Dodge dealership on the corner of Pollock and Hancock Streets, immediately began enumerating reasons why Cecil should accept a third term. We were all convinced that Cecil had done

an outstanding job and wanted him to continue but he was adamant. So I promptly arose and nominated Dan Roberts. This brought Dan to his feet again as he enumerated his reasons for not accepting, some of which we threw back in his face since he had just refuted the same reasons to persuade Cecil to take the job. Much to my shocked surprise, Dan then nominated me for the job. I was so shocked I could think of only one reason to refuse at the time, I had to go call my dad (who was also my boss) to find if he would agree for me to serve. That was a big mistake. The whole board then began teasing me with, "The little boy's got to go call Papa and get his permission." Well, Papa was not available, so there I was, scared to death, but now president of the Chamber of Commerce.

Only later did I realize that I would have to make a speech before about one hundred business people and most of their wives. This project almost made me resign from the presidency, but instead I joined the local Toastmasters Club, headed at that time by L. C. Scott, Jr. This started a most rewarding association with Toastmasters that has lasted-- at this writing-- 25 years.

This original club dissolved a couple of years later, but a few more years later (about 1967), a group headed by J. C. Outlaw, then New Bern City manager, and I were able to charter a new club which is still functioning today and stronger than ever.

While I was president of the chamber, the Tryon Palace Commission decided that additional property was needed to extend the Palace grounds to where they had originally been, and this made it necessary for them to condemn several properties located on the Trent River

waterfront. This was after the wooden bridge had been replaced by the current Trent River bridge leading off East Front Street.

One of the property owners, Guy Hamilton, Sr., asked me if I would testify for him as to the value of his property being condemned. Since he had been such an ardent supporter of the Chamber of Commerce and was a good friend as well, I agreed. As a result of this incident I learned a valuable lesson. When I took the stand in court, I made the statement that I did not speak for the Chamber of Commerce but rather for myself as an individual. The attorney for the Palace Commission, Hap Tucker, questioned me and got me so confused I had trouble finding my way out of the courtroom. So I made a poor witness for the property owner.

Despite my ineffectiveness as a witness for the property owner, the Sun Journal two days later carried a letter from John Kellenberger saying it was a sad state of affairs when the President of the Chamber of Commerce took a position in opposition to the Tryon Palace. It was beside the point that the chamber had actively supported the restoration from the start.

I did not see my testimony in any way as opposition to the Palace, but rather simply a desire to see the property owners get a fair price for their property. At the next meeting of the chamber board, however, I was called on the carpet and directed to make a formal apology to the Kellenbergers. This taught me that if you are president of an organization such as the chamber, you are president 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. You cannot successfully divorce yourself from that position, even temporarily.

About 1952, as I remember, much concern had developed over the possibility of a nuclear attack, so a civil defense agency was started nationwide, and Craven County followed suit, appointing Colonel Albert T. Willis, Sr. director of the agency. Col. Willis had been a full Colonel in World War I and was considered well qualified to run this agency. Colonel Willis in turn appointed me as his assistant since I had been an Army officer also. Not long afterward, Col. Willis died leaving me as director by default. Both of our posts were voluntary.

Much sooner than I would have liked, I was called on to function as an emergency coordinator when hurricane Hazel threatened the North Carolina coast and it looked as if New Bern was in its path. Fortunately for us, Hazel turned inland so we missed much of its fury, losing only a few trees. We were not so fortunate the next year, and I will here take the liberty of recounting a letter I wrote to the editor of the Sun Journal in September 1989 on New Bern's experience with hurricanes.

In the latter part of September 1955, we began to hear weather reports such as, "Winds of 80 miles per hour with gusts to 125 miles per hours." Such a weather report might strike terror in the hearts of some Craven County old timers or residents of Harkers Island, but many people who have not experienced a hurricane say that they would like to see one. Well, I felt that way myself a few years ago, and I have to admit they are exciting. But the havoc they can wreak and the suddenness with which they become a terrible threat, make them very undesirable company to say the least - I know from experience.

We heard so much about "gusts" that Mrs. Pickett Duffy, another

volunteer, and I, began calling each other "Gus." We said hello to "Gus" for the third time on October 17, 1955. Connie had hit us broadside just thirty-three days earlier and Diane just five days after Connie. Trees were still down all over town, storm sewers were flooded, power and phone lines were out, and roofing companies were stretched to the limit doing makeshift repairs to roofs until they could get back to make repairs permanent.

Mrs. Carter, who was then executive secretary of the Red Cross, called me on September 13th, I was civil defense director for New Bern and Craven County at the time, and she said, "Bill, have you heard the latest weather reports?" "No", I said, "Do I want to?" "Probably not" she replied, "but Ione is headed this way and it looks as if it will be at least as bad as the ones we just had."

I stopped at the Red Cross office as I went out to check the railroad yard and another report was coming in over the radio as I entered. Wind speed had risen to 125 mph and its course split New Bern right in the middle.

By the 16th, the storm was 12 to 18 hours away but we were beginning to feel the cool, clammy, gusty winds that signaled the approach of a hurricane. The previous two storms had each dumped 10 to 15 inches of water on us, the rivers were full and the water table was about a quarter of an inch below ground level. We began preparations for a storm as bad as the previous ones. Connie and Diane, striking only a week apart, had done considerable damage but it was damage we were able to cope with.

Ione continued on course without wavering, so we began alerting

people for possible evacuation. Many of them who lived on the waterfront left and went inland to Kinston or Goldsboro, some as far as Raleigh. Others who had lived through the first two storms, felt that they could ride this one out also.

Ione's wind was little, if any, stronger than Connie and Diane, but she was slowing down and would hit just about the same time that high tide reached the coast. Wind speed was steadily increasing and boring in from the northeast, the direction from which hurricane winds hit us when the eye moves across New Bern, or not far south of us.

The mouth of Neuse River where it empties into Pamlico Sound, offers a funnel to a northeast wind and allows water to pour up the river.

There is no moon tide at New Bern, according to the Army Corps of Engineers -- we experience only wind tide -- but a high tide prevents water coming down Neuse River from emptying freely into Pamlico Sound.

What is now known as Bicentennial Park was under water by 5 PM -- not unusual then. We were desperately listening for a weather report to find out where the storm was, but the next report was rather vague.

So I called the Wilmington Weather Bureau and their comforting report was "We have lost it. It came ashore near Atlantic Beach and we cannot locate the eye." We found out later that the eye had stalled over by Cherry Point and remained there for six hours.

By this time we did not need a weather forecast. The rivers were rising at least a foot an hour, and during one hour the water rose three feet. I called the National Guard which had a truck company in New Bern that was assigned several 2-1/2 ton trucks equipped with snorkels that enabled them to drive through water deep enough to cover

the engine.

Fortunately radio stations stayed on the air throughout the emergency and people had learned to provide themselves with battery operated radios, so we could keep them informed. Telephones continued to work in many locations and calls began to pour in from people requesting help in evacuating their homes.

By now, Tryon Palace Drive was under as much as three feet of water. Later, only the coin portion of parking meters in the area were visible and motor boats plied the street.

A call came in from a house that sat on the bank of the Neuse River at the foot of Johnson Street. They were afraid that the house would fall into the river. So, we dispatched a group of volunteers to attempt a rescue. This group was led by Max Powell and included, I think, Scottie Scott III; I don't recall who the others were. This group made repeated attempts to launch an inflated rubber boat, only to have it capsize with every attempt. Finally someone came with an outboard motor boat and they were able to remove the people from the roof of their front porch. Not long after, the house actually did fall into the river.

Some of the residents of Woodrow, an old gentleman in particular, refused to be evacuated, saying, "This is all we own in the world and I ain't gonna leave it." The old gentleman made this statement as water swirled around the foot of the chest on which he sat. Finally the National Guardsmen took him on their shoulders and carried him, protesting, to their truck. As they emerged from the house, the old gentleman remarked, "Well, the river shore enuf has rose, ain't it."

The Guardsmen on whose shoulders he sat, did not tell us what their answer was.

As the water continued to rise higher and higher, areas began to flood that even the Guard trucks could not reach. The water finally covered eighty percent of New Bern in depths from an inch to 10-1/2 feet. This was determined later by the city engineer after the water receded.

Finding the phones now inoperative, I went out to look for some means of contacting the Marine Corps at Camp LeJeune where I knew they had 2-1/2 ton amphibious trucks, commonly called "ducks."

A highway patrolman visiting the Red Cross office told us they still had radio contact with patrol headquarters in Raleigh, so we commandeered a jeep and went to the patrol station. This was a roundabout trip since water from the drainage ditch that passes under Broad Street near the present Palace Motel had washed out the street.

The patrol station was then out on US-17 south, somewhere near where Glenburnie Road now crosses US-17.

At the patrol station I had to stand by biting my fingernails while the Governor told the news media how heroic he was in dispatching help to flooded areas. Finally, contact was made with Civil Defense headquarters in Raleigh and we requested five "ducks" and were assured that our request would be promptly granted. We returned to the Red Cross office expecting the ducks within a couple of hours, about the time it would take them to drive the thirty-eight miles from Jacksonville. We didn't reckon with government bureaucracy however.

The ducks showed up eight hours later.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, we still needed them and promptly dispatched them to areas flooded the worst. One went to Duffy Field, an area that often flooded even in a heavy rain. As the duck pulled up to the upstairs porch of one house, the woman of the house remarked, "My Gawd, they've sent a battleship after us!"

About 5 AM, as I remember, the water had begun to recede, so I went to the National Guard armory -- after thirty-six hours of fighting the storm -- to see how they had fared. I learned that they had evacuated over 2,000 people without a single injury to themselves or to the people rescued.

(Please now run this tape to its end and turn it over to Side B.)

While I was at the armory, Captain Eddie Paul, who had directed the National Guard rescue effort, took a good look at my face and said, "Bill, come back in my office. I have something you need." There he reached behind a filing cabinet and pulled out a half gallon jar of Craven County corn and a large paper cup. That was the best and most needed tranquilizer I ever experienced.

Fortunately, but sadly, only two people had died during the storm. One, a small child, had fallen off a porch and drowned before anyone could reach him. The other death involved a farmer out in the county who had gone to check on his chickens when a henhouse fell on him causing him to drown.

Another incident involving bureaucracy needs mentioning here, so, hopefully, it will not be repeated. A good many people were left

homeless after the storm and it occurred to us at the Red Cross office that there were empty apartments at the Trent Court housing facility.

So, we called Buck Blandford who headed the Housing Authority at the time and asked that as many people as possible be allowed to temporarily occupy these vacant units. His answer was a prompt "No. I have no authority to do that.", he said and no amount of persuasion could change his mind.

Being somewhat angered by this response, I went to see U.S. Representative Graham Barden, who happened to be home from Washington for a few days, and explained the need and Blandford's response to him. He instantly called the Housing Agency in Washington and almost melted the wires with a blistering report, concluding with, "I want those units opened and I want them opened now! I will be waiting for a call from Blandford within ten minutes telling me that those units are open." The units were opened VERY shortly thereafter.

The damage to New Bern was such that the National Civil Defense Director came down from Washington to survey the damage. As a result of his visit, Craven and Pamlico Counties were declared disaster areas, thus eligible for federal assistance.

The National Guard thought their rescues ended their job, but damaged buildings became the object of looting and they had to stay on guard duty for several days after the storm had passed.

So, if you hear anyone saying that they would like to see a hurricane, tell them to go to Cuba or the Virgin Islands. We don't want one in New Bern.

The Red Cross had sent a disaster team to New Bern as Ione

approached and they were a God-send because they were seasoned veterans of all types of disasters and helped us greatly in planning and executing evacuations. They also stayed around after the hurricane with a much larger team to handle requests from people who had lost or had their homes severely damaged, GIVING, not LENDING, money to those who qualified.

During Hurricane Ione, I was fortunate to have my wife and children and my parents living on some of the scarce high ground in New Bern that was not flooded. I was able to maintain telephone contact with them throughout the storm and personally checked on them several times by jeep. I was also fortunate to have a wife that did not panic despite being left alone with three children during a severe hurricane.

Sometime during these years -- I am not sure of the dates -- the Chamber of Commerce participated in a fund drive to support a Presbyterian college in New Bern. This drive was considered to be a successful undertaking, but the Laurinburg area rose to the challenge, out-bid New Bern, and the college went there.

Two or more years later, a drive was mounted to raise funds to support a Baptist college to be located somewhere in eastern North Carolina. This time a professional fund raising firm was employed by the Baptist group to head the fund drive, but local chamber members and other volunteers did the leg work. Again we felt that we had done a creditable job, but lost the college, this time to Mount Olive.

In September 1957, the stock of the Atlantic & East Carolina railway was sold to the Southern Railway. Southern is now the Norfolk Southern which still operates the Atlantic & North Carolina Railroad,

and via the North Carolina Railroad, also owned primarily by the state, runs from Morehead City to Greensboro.

Having been merged out of a job, I joined with Cecil King and Earl Finch, who operated Ace Electric Company, in starting the East Coast Supply Company about 1958, seeking to break into the lucrative restaurant supply and refrigeration business. This proved to be a mistake since a major capital investment would have been necessary to compete with the old established restaurant suppliers. So this operation folded.

About 1961 the threat of a nuclear attack from Russia caused an intense interest to develop in civil defense, and since I was already volunteer civil defense director, I was offered a job as full time director for New Bern and Craven County. Jones County was added later.

A part of this job was locating and stocking fallout shelters. This proved to be a difficult task, since there were few buildings so constructed as to offer much protection from nuclear fallout and people were reluctant to let their basements be used as shelters. In retrospect I see this as a futile undertaking because we were able to identify and stock shelters for about a tenth of the population of New Bern and far less for the rural population in Craven and Jones Counties.

Soon after the civil defense agency became a full time operation, the Cuban missile crisis caused us to give some thought to how well we were prepared. Fortunately the crisis was handled so as to avoid putting our preparations to the test. The civil defense agency proved to be worthwhile however as a natural disaster coordinating agency

that was called upon to function during several hurricanes and a tornado that struck and did severe damage in Craven and Jones Counties about 1965, I think.

During this period the North Carolina Civil Defense Association was formed and I began attending semi-annual meetings. At a meeting of the program committee, I spoke out as favoring meetings that would address real problems in our counties. This proved to be a mistake, because I was appointed program committee chairman and later elected president of the association.

One very useful function I was able to perform then was to assist rural fire departments in obtaining military surplus fire trucks and support vehicles to provide fire protection where little or none existed. This led to formation of a very effective fire network throughout Craven County and much of Jones County. Toward the end of my career in civil defense, I was appointed fire marshall. This job was largely in name only, since I knew little about fighting fires and even less about detecting arson.

From 1964 through 1972 I served as chairman of the Red Cross blood drive in Craven County. This proved to be a satisfying but at the same time a frustrating experience. It seems that blood donors are easy to find if there is a well known local person in need of blood, but to get people to donate blood for John Q. Public is a trying job.

Several ideas were tried which we hoped would attract donors. One of these was a used auto donated by the Jaycees to be awarded to the holder of the lucky ticket among those given to each person who donated blood in that particular drive. This idea helped some but it was no

panacea.

Another problem was finding doctors willing to stand by at the donating site. A notable exception was Dr. Robert Holmes who cheerfully served his share of the time. Red Cross later permitted us to have a doctor who would agree to be on call at his office or at home while the blood drive was in progress. This essentially solved that problem.

During this same period, the county school system led by Superintendent Robert L. Pugh proposed a school bond issue that was sorely needed to build more school facilities and to upgrade existing facilities. This bond issue was strongly supported by the Chamber of Commerce and passed without serious opposition.

Sometime later a move was mounted to build a Craven County Hospital since St. Luke's was becoming outdated and overcrowded. The Chamber of Commerce took a leading role in promoting the bond issue required to finance the hospital construction. The bond issue was passed and the hospital opened in 1963 with one hundred beds.

Interest in civil defense had begun to wane about that time, so when I was offered the job of director of the New Bern Waterfront Redevelopment Project, I took it.

A group of local citizens, among them whom were Clarence "Pop" Beasley, Johnny Dunn, Harry Vatz, Clifton McCotter, and several others, tried to get a redevelopment project for the "Five Points" area, but due to resistance from property owners in the area this project was finally dropped. Another project was proposed and approved, to develop the area now known as Bicentennial Park.

The Redevelopment Commission was made up of John Dunn, chairman;

Harry Vatz; Sam Branch; Bill Moore Bryan; and Clifton McCotter. Later Cliff McCotter became incapacitated and was replaced by Walter Jones.

The initial plan was to buy and demolish all but three buildings in an area bounded by Hancock Street, Tryon Palace Drive, East Front Street and the Trent River, some fourteen acres as I remember. The riverfront in this area was to be protected by a bulkhead and the entire property was to be filled to bring it up to a minimum height of seven and a half feet above sea level.

Soon after the urban renewal project was started, Mrs. Diggs sold the Sun Journal to the Freedom Papers. This chain of papers was strongly opposed to federal money being used for urban renewal and gave us a hard time during the entire life of the project.

The total cost of the project was set at something over \$3.5 million and the money for this project was obtained by selling U.S. Treasury Bills (90 day bills as I remember) as the money was needed.

When the second batch of bills was sold, the first issue was liquidated and added to the second issue. The same principal as if an individual borrowed \$1,000 from a bank for 90 days, then at the expiration of 90 days added an additional \$1,000 and extended the note for 90 more days. According to the Sun Journal's reasoning, however, the individual has now borrowed \$3,000 (the initial thousand plus the new note for \$2,000).

Using this reasoning, the Sun Journal claimed that we had borrowed over \$14 million (on a \$3.5 million project) before the project was even completed. A local business man and good friend asked me what we had done with \$14 million. I explained what had happened. In the

face of this distortion of the news, John Dunn and I went to Ed Book, editor of the paper, and explained how the project financing worked.

He said, "Write me a letter explaining just what you have told me and I will publish it." He was as good as his word. He published the letter, then less than a week later took the Redevelopment Commission to task for borrowing \$14 million.

As an old saying goes, "You can't fight City Hall." We added another, "You can't fight the press and win." The press always has the last word.

When the redevelopment property was ready to be marketed (about 1975) interest rates were high and developers were reluctant to take on more development. The project was physically completed in 1978 and at that time only Wachovia Bank had bought property and built on it. The project was officially closed out in 1978 and turned over to the city of New Bern.

A sidelight to the story of New Bern's downtown redevelopment project is the nickname of "Bicentennial Park", a name that has hung on since 1974-76 when the park was the site of a bicentennial celebration.

The city of New Bern, in preparation for the bicentennial celebration, appointed a bicentennial commission headed by Joe Freemon as chairman and George Allen Ives as vice-chairman. These two were ably assisted by Braughn Taylor, a recent history graduate, as director of the commission.

An elaborate celebration was planned starting with a re-enactment of the meeting of the First Provincial Congress that took

place in Craven County Courthouse in 1774. A large stage was built on the newly prepared "Bicentennial Park" where the Sheraton hotel now stands. A large canvas "tent" was procured to make a roof over this stage to protect the performers since it would be used during the summer rainy season. A large group of bleachers was built in front of this stage consisting of heavy boards placed on posts sunk in the ground. In writing up the preparations for the celebration, the Sun Journal carried an article by reported Meg Gunkel stating that, "According to Taylor, the people of New Bern and Craven County have made the bicentennial a success. A lot of people and a lot of effort have gone into the celebration, said Taylor." "One resident, Bill Edwards, gave up his vacation to install benches for seating at Bicentennial Park", said the Sun Journal article. "It's that kind of person who has made the Bicentennial a success, Taylor said, and his name won't appear on any program or anything. He's just one of many who gave up time to insure the success of the Bicentennial."

Another person who gave considerable time to the success of the bicentennial celebration was Charles Taylor who functioned as production manager for the stage shows. It was Charlie's job to negotiate with the performers to keep the cost within budget, and Charlie was a good one for that job. A trailer was placed behind the stage to serve as a dressing room and also a "refreshment room" for some of the performers, particularly for "Blood Sweat and Tears", a popular rock group.

The weather proved true to its designation as the "rainy season." Every day of bicentennial week, it rained from noon until about 5

PM, and the volunteer stage crew, including myself, were kept busy using long poles to push the canvas up so the accumulated rain would run off to the outside. We finally cut small slits in the canvas so the water would run through and could be mopped up before the nightly performance started.

One night when a large singing chorus was on stage, the stage collapsed dumping the performers on the deck. Fortunately no one was hurt and the performers bravely continued. A hurry-up repair job was completed the next morning in time for the next performance.

"Blood Sweat and Tears" was a big hit on Thursday, as I remember, and played numerous encores. The performance concluded on Saturday evening with the North Carolina Symphony playing several popular numbers. They concluded with "The Grand Old Flag" as the spotlight played on the flag at the top of the nearby flagpole causing chills to run up and down many spines. This number signaled the beginning of a fine fireworks display.

(This ends this portion of the tape and does not nearly cover the events that have taken place during my life in New Bern, but it has taxed my tired old brain to recount this much and I don't want to risk boring people who may listen to this tape. This ends the first portion of this tape.)

(And here begins the second portion of the tape.)

There are people whom I consider important in New Bern's history but remember few details about them. I feel that those people should

be remembered since they each played a role in New Bern's history and had some significance to me. I present here a list of those people whom I have not already remembered with some reference to their significance.

The names are listed in alphabetical order, last name first, but I will not read them that way.

ANDERS, CLOYCE - Runs C. H. Stitch Insurance Agency; active in Jaycees; served on Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and served a term as president.

BARNHARDT, CRAIG - City Manager of New Bern for several years; well respected in community; succeeded by Ed Welch.

BARTLING, BILL - New Bern director of utilities for many years before retiring from that job.

BELANGIA, ED - Police chief for many years; was voted for his network of informers. A&EC Railroad had a break-in of a boxcar on New Bern yard. We reported it to Chief Belangia and he had the culprit in custody within a few hours.

BENGEL, ELLA, Mrs. R. E. Bengel, Jr. - served on New Bern Board of Aldermen and later elected mayor.

CHADWICK, WILL - Mr. Everything in New Bern and Craven County. Served as Chairman of the East Carolina Council of Boy Scouts; Chairman of Craven County Chapter of Red Cross; first chairman of United Way in New Bern. I served with him on the first United Way board.

DAVIS, BOBBIE; EDWARDS, DOUGLAS; WILLIAMS, JOHNNIE - All members of the local Civil Air Patrol. I worked closely with these people while I was Civil Defense Director and flew with them on several

training exercises, one of which I planned. Also flew with them on the River Patrol as they patrolled the Neuse and Trent Rivers on weekends to spot any boat that might be in trouble and need help.

DAVIS, L. DOUGLAS - Director of Industrial Arts for Craven County schools; served on Chamber Board and served a term as president. Doug and I combined our efforts in 1980 to get Swiss Bear organized and incorporated. We were also successful in getting the downtown tax district approved by Aldermen. Doug served as the first chairman of Swiss Bear.

HALL, CHARLES, H. JR. "Shoot" - Made his own tapes, No. 1501 & 1501.2 for Transportation Task Force. Refuses to reveal how he came to be nicknamed "Shoot".

HANCOCK, GRACE, Mrs. C. E. Hancock, Jr. - Very active in New Bern Woman's Club and Christ Episcopal Church; served on church vestry; elected Woman of the Year by Woman's Club in 1970's.

HERNDON, ALTON - Plant manager of Hatteras Yachts in New Bern; served on Chamber Board, later president. Transferred to High Point to Hatteras home office and later made president of Hatteras.

HOWARD, LOUIS - Started radio station WHIT; renovated Gaston Hotel and renamed it Governor Tryon.

JEFFERIES, BILL - Ran radio station WRNB; served on Chamber Board ad a term as president.

KAFER, A. A. "Shorty" - Ran a bakery on Broad Street across from New Bern's central fire station. Shorty was a volunteer fireman and I think served as fire chief at one time. After closing the bakery, he ran the Masonic Theater in the Masonic Hall on Hancock Street.

KARAM, TOMMY - Ran Tryon Realty in association with Lonnie Pridgen. Tommy, Lonnie, Gordon Parrot, and Milton "Chick" Askew bought and renovated the old Belk building and converted it into a mall that now houses quite a number of businesses, including Swiss Bear, the Chamber of Commerce, and the U. S. Post Office. Tommy was active in many areas of New Bern life.

KELSO, LYNN - Principal in Beasley; Kelso Insurance and Real Estate. Was deeply involved in Craven Technical Institute which later became Craven Community College and served as chairman of the college trustees for several years.

KENNEDY, TED - Ran Belk store in New Bern for a good many years until he retired. Served on Chamber Board; active in many civic project.

KIMBRELL, CHARLES - Ran Kimbrell's Outboard Service on Pembroke Road - "Trash Pile Yacht Club" as he called it since it bordered on the city dump that became Lawson Creek Park. He later served on the New Bern Board of Aldermen; was elected mayor (for two terms I think); later served as Director of Public Works and then Director of Utilities before retiring.

LUPTON, MACK - Ran Lupton's Freezer Plant, one of the first in the area; mayor of New Bern for at least two terms; great booster of New Bern and Tryon Palace.

MAYO, HIRAM, SR. - Superintendent of Craven County schools succeeding R. L. Pugh.

MACDONALD, HARRY, SR. - Superintendent of New Bern City schools until his retirement.

MILLNS, DR. DALE - Physician; started New Bern Urology Clinic; served on New Bern Board of Aldermen and served as mayor.

MITCHELL, THOMAS, SR. - Ran Mitchell Hardware on South Front Street (Tryon Palace Drive) until he retired. His sons; John and Tom, Jr., took over operation of the store when "Tom Daddy" retired. John finally left and went into teaching in the New Bern City schools. Tom moved the store to the old city hall building on Craven Street when the redevelopment project took his building. John tells the tale of an event that occurred while he was away serving in the U. S. Air Force, an event he learned about while getting a haircut in Raleigh as he was returning home. It seems that a mule walked into Mitchell's store early one morning and when Tom, Sr. rolled up a newspaper and tried to drive the mule out, the mule fell dead in the aisle. Tom called son Tom seeking help to get rid of the mule. Tom, Jr. accused his daddy of being under the influence. A call to the police department brought the same reaction. After several such occurrences, Tom, Sr. finally convinced Tom, Jr. that the mule was no joke and he helped remove the mule.

MORRIS, RALPH - Worked with Stallings Brothers until the business was divided, then ran Eastern Rulane Gas Company. Ralph was active in the Jaycees and served a term as president of the Chamber of Commerce.

O'BRYAN, ROBERT C. "Obie" - Made his own tape, No. 1504 for the Transportation Task Force.

OLSEN, OLE - Mill manager of the New Bern Weyerhaeuser plant; served very effectively on the Chamber board.

ORRINGER, KATHLEEN - Served for a good number of years as Director

of the Craven County Board of Elections; served on Craven Community College Board of Trustees and last few years as chairman.

PARROTT, GORDON - Founded and ran Foodland Grocery Company; was associated with Tommy Karam and Lonnie Pridgen and the group that turned the Belk building into O'Marks Mall.

POLLOCK, RAYMOND - Ran Smaw-Pollock Funeral Home on Hancock Street where Carolina Telephone now has its downtown parking lot; served on Chamber Board of Directors.

POTTER, B. M. - Civil Engineer; legendary leader of Troop 13 of the Boy Scouts for many years. I served as his assistant for a couple of years beginning about 1944. I enjoyed hearing him tell of the Matamuskeet Lake drainage project for which he was chief engineer.

PRIDGEN, LONNIE - Partner with Tommy Karam in Tryon Realty Company and in O'Marks Mall.

PUGH, ROBERT L. - Superintendent of Craven County schools; succeeded by Hiram Mayo, Sr. Bob was also a Baptist preacher and spoke eloquently at many public affairs.

SCHOLZ, NICK - Retired Air Force officer; served as Executive Vice-President of the Chamber until his retirement in 1982. I succeeded him in that position and served until my retirement in 1985.

STALLINGS, DANNY - Runs Stallings, Anderson & Plettner Insurance Agency; son of Livingston Stallings; very active in Jaycees; served on Chamber Board and a term as president of the Chamber.

STALLINGS, ROBERT L. - Associated with brother, Livingston, in running Stallings Brothers Gas & Appliances, in the building now (1993) occupied by Cotten Funeral Home. Bob served on the Chamber board and

later was director of the N.C. Department of Conservation and Development; ran for the U. S. House of Representatives when Graham Barden retired; has been chairman of the Tryon Palace Commission for a good many years.

STALLINGS, D. LIVINGSTON - Associated with Bob in Stallings Brothers until the company divided and Livingston opened an insurance business; was chairman of the Craven County Board of Commissioners and later elected to the N. C. House of Representatives and served until his death. He was my boss when I was Civil Defense Director and was an outstanding boss.

STEINBERG, LOUIS - Ran Central News; was very active in the New Bern Synagogue; and after retirement was an active volunteer in the New Bern schools.

TAYLOR, BURKE - Ran Cadillac-Buick Agency on South Front Street across from the present Farmer's Marker. Burke served for several years as chairman of the city school board.

TURNER, FRED - Station manager for National Airlines at New Bern for several years until he was transferred by National to Orlando, Florida.

WELCH, EDWARD - New Bern City Manager for several years until he took the job of city manager of Eden, N.C. He died while working in that position.

WILLIAMS, KAY - Worked for Proctor & Gamble in Greenville until employed to run Swiss Bear. As director of Swiss Bear, she teamed with Harold Talton and induced the Sheraton Hotel to locate on the Bicentennial Park property. She later took the position of director

of the Tryon Palace Restoration.

ZAYTOUN, JOSEPH - Ran Zaytoun Insurance Agency in New Bern until he moved the business to Raleigh; was active in Jaycees until he aged out; served on the Chamber Board of Director.