

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

WILLIAM BAXTER

INTERVIEW 601

This is Nat Dixon. I am recording an interview with Bill Baxter for the Memories of New Bern Committee. Today is May 8, 1991. I'm doing this in my home. Bill is a long time resident of New Bern and lives at 215 New Street. I'm sure he'll have some interesting things to tell us from his memories.

Nat Dixon: I want to ask you first, how long have you lived in New Bern, Bill?

Mr. Baxter: Mostly all of my life.

ND: What were your daddy and mother's names?

Mr. Baxter: My father's name was William K. Baxter and my mother was named Eugenia Dixon.

ND: Kin to me maybe. (laughter) What kind of business was he in?

Mr. Baxter: He was a salesman for Swift & Company.

ND: Were you any kin to the Baxters who operated a sports store on Middle Street?

Mr. Baxter: He was my first cousin.

ND: How about Dr. Baxter, the Optometrist? You kin to that set of Baxters?

Mr. Baxter: Yes. We're first cousins. Of course, the later generation are second cousins.

ND: I suppose the Baxters in New Bern are all part of that same family, then.

Mr. Baxter: That's right.

ND: It's not true of us Dixons. Pamlico County is full of Dixons,

none of them are kin to each other, and all of the telephone booths has a pile of Dixons in them and none of us are any kin to each other.

But that's not true about the Baxter situation.

Mr. Baxter: The Baxter's came from Currituck years ago and settled in Stonewall.

ND: Currituck, North Carolina, right?

Mr. Baxter: Yes. That's where the Baxter's came from.

ND: What have you done most of your life in the way of work?

Mr. Baxter: I was a salesman.

ND: What did you sell?

Mr. Baxter: Meats. Then I worked for Henderson Candy Company and at the base.

ND: At Cherry Point?

Mr. Baxter: Yes.

ND: Do you mind saying how old you are now?

Mr. Baxter: I was born January 23, 1904.

ND: You got it on me about a few years. I was born in 1913. That would be nine years older than me. That's great. Do you see anything on this list of memories that you want to talk about? You lived on New Street most of your life?

Mr. Baxter: All my life. We built the house.

ND: Do you remember any of the interesting people that you grew up with?

Mr. Baxter: Yes. Across the street was a colored family. The old colored man was named Uncle Sandy and I better call him Uncle Sandy.

He had a good many children and we played together. ND: What did he do for a living, do you remember?

Mr. Baxter: Just odd jobs. I imagine he was once a slave. I imagine that's where he got his property. Slave owners gave them lots and houses to live in. The second door from me was Aunt Lucy. I imagine she was a slave. She had a colored boy named Charlie. He was a nice boy.

ND: That neighborhood changed a whole lot as time went on. Black folks all moved out of that territory to other parts of town. They were some interesting people. Because along in there, those folks owned their property and they were respectable citizens, weren't they?

Mr. Baxter: The best people on earth.

ND: Did you live anywhere near Miss Hatchie Harrison?

Mr. Baxter: Yes, I remember her.

ND: Didn't she live nearby?

Mr. Baxter: She lived next door to me. She was a healer. A practitioner they called her. She brought the Christian Science down here.

ND: She introduced, and got it established in New Bern?

Mr. Baxter: Yes.

ND: Helped build that church no doubt.

Mr. Baxter: Yes. I'm related to the Goodings.

ND: Nat Gooding? The one that used to run The Tribune?

Mr. Baxter: Yes.

ND: I worked for him during the early days of that paper.

Mr. Baxter: He was one of my cousins from Pamlico County.

ND: The rest of his family didn't belong to the Christian Science Church, Nat Gooding did as I recall. Just him.

Mr. Baxter: Just him I believe.

ND: He was quite a smart fellow. He was up at the University of North Carolina the same time that Thomas Wolfe, the author, was.

In fact, Thomas Wolfe was editor of the Tar Heel and Nat was the business manager of the Tar Heel. Governor Luther Hodges was there at the same time. Nat used to tell about how Governor Hodges would go around up and down the hall with his shoes hanging around his neck.

He made money by shoe repairs. He'd go around and get the guy's shoes and hang them around his neck. It was a common sight to see Luther Hodges whipping it down the halls of the college with shoes hanging around his neck. (laughter) I've heard also another little story about Luther Hodges. When he was a boy, some Presbyterian preacher got a hold of him one day and said, "Luther, you could become Governor of North Carolina if you wanted to if you set your head to it!" He was a poor boy and that preacher took an interest in him and helped him get educated. Of course, as time went on he made it big in the world.

It occurred to him one day what that preacher said. He said, "You could be Governor of North Carolina if he wanted," to and he came down here and took an old car and drove all up and down the state stopping at filling stations politicking running for Lt. Governor. I believe it was Governor Broughton that had the heart attack and died. But anyway, he became Governor and fulfilled the prediction of the

preacher.

Mr. Baxter: The Foots lived in my neighborhood.

ND: I remember the Foots well. I went to school with Katherine and Sonny. Harry was the oldest one.

Mr. Baxter: That was a nice family.

ND: Yes it was. As a matter of fact, years later after they had gone off to Washington D.C. and elsewhere, I got a call from Katherine asking me if I'd be a pallbearer in her mother's funeral.

Old man Harry, the daddy, was kinda in the play business. He had a program and traveled around with a group. Do you remember that?

Mr. Baxter: Yes. They built a, let's call it a yacht. Summer Land was the name of it. It was roomy. It had a Model T horse engine. I think it was a T. It could of been an A. It would move right on.

ND: I remember that thing. That was quite a boat. I used to get a Christmas card. I believe it was from Harry. Every year he took a New Bern telephone book down to Florida with him or wherever and he'd send out all these Christmas cards at Christmas. The first time I got a Christmas card from old Harry I was surprised because I was never that close to Harry. He never was a close friend of mine.

But I enjoyed every Christmas. I looked forward to my Christmas card from Harry Foot every year. (laughter)

Mr. Baxter: I'll tell you something. When we were in high school, every high school boy that could join the National Guard joined it.

I believe it was Washington and Kinston had a battery. That was the reason they joined it. We'd go to Fort Bragg for fourteen days. We

had a crack ball team and we'd go down there to play ball and lick these other towns. That was the main reason we joined the battery.

ND: The battery wasn't even organized in New Bern at that time, or was it? Did they have a Battery D?

Mr. Baxter: Yes.

ND: It was organized at that time?

Mr. Baxter: Yes.

ND: You were too young for World War I.

Mr. Baxter: Yes.

ND: I had an uncle who was in that. As a matter of fact he's dead.

Mr. Baxter: My father was in World War I. He didn't go overseas. He broke his foot in a sham battle.

ND: My uncle made it through the war and was in Paris, and got colitis. He didn't get shot, but died of colitis in the hospital. Miss Hatchie as I recall was a music teacher, wasn't she? Didn't she teach music?

Mr. Baxter: Miss Hatchie Harrison?

ND: Who were those ladies across the street that taught music?

Mr. Baxter: They were cousin Ola and cousin Emma.

ND: Ola Ferebee.

Mr. Baxter: Now, Emma taught school. She was a good teacher. She was Christian Science. The school board required teachers to take a physical exam, and she was kind of run down. She didn't take any medicine and they say that's what killed her.

ND: Just wouldn't take medicine?

Mr. Baxter: Just wouldn't build herself up.

ND: You graduated from New Bern High School, right?

Mr. Baxter: Yes.

ND: You remember the construction of any of those buildings?

The two buildings that were there all the while of course were the Bell building and the Academy building. The elementary building is where I went to first grade with Miss Georgia Keane and Miss Molly Heath. Remember Miss Molly Heath?

Mr. Baxter: Sure. First teacher.

ND: I went to her class the first day I was there, but then I got transferred over into Miss Georgia Keane's class who later became Mrs. Dowdy. I think she's still living in fact. The Moses Griffin building was a reasonably new building compared to the Bell building and the Academy building. I graduated in the Moses Griffin. I was living here with Joe Patterson. I was remembering how we used to go to chapel. We'd march over to Moses Griffin building and go up to the auditorium to chapel.

Mr. Baxter: That's right.

ND: One time Senator Simmons, you remember Senator Simmons, Joe Patterson's granddaddy?

Mr. Baxter: Sure.

ND: He made a speech up there. I remember that. That's quite a few years ago. Did you go to college?

Mr. Baxter: State for three years.



ND: I never got to go to college. I graduated from high school in 1930 during the bottom of the Depression and I was matriculated in Duke University and in the University of Cincinnati. Both of them. But I just couldn't raise the money to get there.

Mr. Baxter: At the time when I was going to school, Professor H. B. Craven was principal of the school.

ND: I remember that name. He preceded Mr. H. B. Smith. Did you remember Mr. Smith very well?

Mr. Baxter: Sure.

ND: He was quite a guy.

Mr. Baxter: I remember Mr. H. B. Craven because he had a cottage at Terrell, North Carolina which was just on the other side of Swannanoa Tunnel. You know Swannanoa Tunnel?

ND: I've heard of it, yeah. Western part of the state up in the mountains, right?

Mr. Baxter: Yes. There was a little town outside of High Point named Trinity. A Methodist minister started a school and the school burned and he moved it to east Durham. It was Trinity College.

ND: That was the beginning of Trinity College at Duke?

Mr. Baxter: Later it became Duke. We used to go up there in the summer time. Back in those days, mosquitoes were so bad in New Bern that you had to sleep under a mosquito net or go to Morehead or the mountains. The New Bern people who were Yankees had come down here and put up sawmills, they had a colony in Black Mountain.

ND: That's right. I remember that. I'll tell you somebody I

remember, a family that went up there every year, the Hollisters.

Mr. Baxter: Sure, the Hollisters and the Mungers.

ND: Blades.

Mr. Baxter: Blades. And they ran a special early train here to make connection with a train in Goldsboro that would carry you right on up all the way to the mountain. There was one place to change, but I don't remember the place you had to transfer.

ND: In 1936, I came from the west coast by train with my brand new wife. We came through Chicago, Chicago to Asheville, Asheville to Goldsboro. I guess that's some of that same train maybe that you're talking about. The old Mullet Line came on into New Bern from Goldsboro.

Mr. Baxter: Professor Craven had I believe it was two daughters; Alice and Irene, and a son, Harvey Craven. They'd spend all summers in Ridgecrest.

ND: No mosquitoes up there.

Mr. Baxter: No. They changed the name from Terrell to Ridgecrest.

ND: I didn't know where Terrell was but I know where Ridgecrest is. I've been to Ridgecrest.

Mr. Baxter: It's the same place.

ND: As a matter of fact, I had a first cousin who was a preacher there one time. His name was Paxton Dixon. I don't suppose you ever knew him.

Mr. Baxter: No.

ND: Drew Dixon was his brother. The Dixon-Conderman Post over

at the American Legion is named after him, Drew Dixon.

Mr. Baxter: I've heard about him.

ND: His brother, Paxton, was a preacher.

Mr. Baxter: Was the family out at Belair?

ND: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: Yeah, I know them.

ND: They were my kin folks. Paxton became a Methodist preacher.

I visited him one time up there in Ridgecrest. I think there was a Methodist camp there or something. Wasn't there something there that some church group had?

Mr. Baxter: It's the assembly for I believe the Baptist church. I assume now, even today.

ND: Methodist go to Lake Junaluska.

Mr. Baxter: Mr. Craven, after he left here had a fountain from a stream up in the mountain that came down to this fountain. In the winter time it would freeze over and he'd cut the ice up in blocks and store it in the side of a hill with sawdust for the summer.

ND: I had an uncle who used to do that in Virginia. I've often wondered that it got cold enough in Virginia to make any ice that a person could cut. But he apparently could. By the way, do you remember when they used to have swimming down at Neuse River?

Mr. Baxter: Yes, at Crabby's.

ND: I learned to swim over there in Bridgeton at a place called Shady Beach. You remember Shady Beach?

Mr. Baxter: Sure. I'll tell you this. To me it was funny.

S. H. Scott ran a delivery stable.

ND: I knew him. Old man Scott. You talking about George Scott's daddy?

Mr. Baxter: Not the young George.

ND: I know. Solomon was the old man's name.

Mr. Baxter: Solomon. He had a daughter who married Robert Hayden who was in the newspaper business. In fact, he moved to Raleigh from here. Of course his family went with him. He had two children. Robert, Jr. married Solomon Scott's daughter. That was Robert Hayden, Jr.'s mother, Laura Mable's mother. They used to come down here in the summer to see their grandmother. This was a long time ago when this happened.

We wanted to go swimming over at Shady Beach. We were just young boys and we didn't have any way to get there. We didn't want to walk it cause we were just children walking on a wooden bridge. So Robert said, "Come on, let's go down to grandfather's place and maybe he'll let us have a mule and cart." We went down there. Of course, his grandfather said, "Sure, you can have a mule and cart." So Laura, Robert, and myself went across this old rickety bridge.

ND: I remember it well. Rattle, rattle, rattle, went the boards.

Mr. Baxter: The railings were made out of two by fours. The sun would draw the nails out and the two by fours would drop down in some places. There wasn't a railing at all. But we went on over there and tied the mule up and went in swimming and came out. That old mule had got tired and stretched out in the traces. There we were. Didn't know what to do. We didn't know how to get that old

mule up. Along came Kenneth Jones. Kenneth Jones father dealt in cotton and feeds with the mules just like Mr. Scott. His place was where the fire station is now. You remember it?

ND: Yeah.

Mr. Baxter: Kenneth says, "I can get that mule up." He went over there and grabbed that old mule's tail and started twisting. He twisted and twisted and twisted when all at once the mule stood up. We came on back. In those days it was perfectly safe for children to drive mules. There weren't any cars to mention.

ND: You probably didn't even pass a car the whole time you were making a trip over there and back, did you?

Mr. Baxter: You're right. Dr. Simmons Patterson had an electric car. Mr. Sloan's, Sloan's Liniment man, he had an electric car. There were very few other cars.

ND: I remember one or two of these old electric cars.

Mr. Baxter: Now Mr. Haywood and Mrs. Haywood, they're buried out here in this cemetery here. I reckon the family cemetery. Mr. Haywood was assistant editor of the News and Observer. In fact, he took the paper over when Josephus Daniels was Secretary of the Navy and also when he was Ambassador to Mexico.

ND: I didn't know that Josephus Daniels was ever Ambassador to Mexico. I knew about him being Secretary of the Navy. I think, matter of fact, Franklin Roosevelt was associated with him. He was a young fellow, but he associated with Josephus Daniels when Josephus Daniels was Secretary of the Navy.

Mr. Baxter: Now Josephus was, I heard, raised in Pamlico County.

ND: I didn't know that.

Mr. Baxter: Is that so?

ND: I don't know.

Mr. Baxter: There's something to that. I'd like to know.

ND: I really don't know. Maybe this will bring it out. It would be an interesting little thing to have in our record here. There used to be a Bridgeton preacher named Ryman. A Swedish fellow.

Mr. Baxter: Yes.

ND: He owned that beach.

Mr. Baxter: That's right.

ND: As a matter of fact, he and my daddy bought the farm that I grew up on out here together. In a year or two afterwards, my daddy bought Mr. Ryman out and became sole owner of it.

Mr. Baxter: We had an old boat here. They said it was the Coast Guard Pamlico Cutter.

ND: I remember that well. The Coast Guard Cutter, Pamlico.

Mr. Baxter: It was docked at the foot of Short Street. It burnt coal. I remember one time over where the Fuller's live, the banks over there, they put up a target and would target practice across the river with their deck gun.

ND: I remember that Pamlico well. By the way, there's a man in town right now whose a retired Admiral from the Coast Guard. He told me the black man, Haley, that wrote Roots was on the Cutter Pamlico.

He was aboard. He was on there right here in New Bern. He went to

school up at that black school up around Elizabeth City. There's a black school up there. I forgot what the name of it was. But anyway, he went on to become a very famous man and big writer. You remember anything about Glenburnnie Park out here where they had the big pavilion?

Mr. Baxter: Sure. They had a fair there in the fall.

ND: The fair was right over here where the TV station is. The park back here where the pavilion was is where Camp Battle was located at during World War II. I remember when I was a boy, we'd go over there to the park and had monkeys and cages and all sorts of things.

Eventually, it went totally down to the dogs. Somebody set the pavilion on fire and burned it down. My mother and father were coming home from having visited his sick father up at Spring Garden in the nighttime and they saw the glare of that light and it scared them to death cause they had an incubator upstairs in our house incubating baby chicks. They were afraid that was our house on fire and us four boys in it. They were scared to death! They got home some kind of happy to find out it wasn't. But it burned that thing totally to the ground.

Mr. Baxter: During the war you know the German prisoners, they would let them go out and work and make money.

ND: Old man Jim West hired them.

Mr. Baxter: Stemming plant. I've seen them in the stemming plant there. They didn't have any guards around them.

ND: I bet the boys seemed to be happy.

Mr. Baxter: Mighty right they were happy.

ND: Old man West would buy them a truckload of watermelons and haul them out to them when he had them working on his farm. He'd feed them watermelons. My brother Basil was in France and he was a guard over German prisoners. He said that the German prisoners were more decent people than the French were. We were over there fighting for the French and the Germans were better people to get along with than the French were.

Mr. Baxter: After the war was over, my brother was in an anti-aircraft battery and he guarded a prison camp of 6,000 German prisoners. My brother said that nearly all of them spoke three languages and they had the best bands, best musicians to give concerts.

They built them a chapel, the Germans. Another thing they liked about the German prisoners was that the Red Cross would give the German prisoners coffee, but they couldn't get coffee, and the German prisoners shared with the battery. (laughter)

ND: The Red Cross got a bad reputation there about some of the things with their coffee and cookies. The Salvation Army would give it away and the Red Cross would charge them for it.

Mr. Baxter: My brother got acquainted with a German prisoner in his camp. He had a store in Paris and he sold clothes, German, at the store in Paris. He went home for a visit and while he was home war was declared and they put him in the Navy. He was shot down in China. The British boats got to him first before the German boats did. People don't believe it but the Germans destroyed all the ports



except Antwerp. They destroyed every seaport. We couldn't bring in supplies. That was our trouble. We had to bring them in by beach.

The Germans still held the Guernsey and Jersey Islands out there til the end of the war. My brother's battery (after they drove the Germans back) was shooting down buzzbombs that the Germans had headed for Antwerp. They moved the battery over to the coast to protect the coast because the Germans would make raids from the Guernsey Islands over to France. So, they set the battery up there and kept the radar on them for a long time. If they left, they could fire them. In fact they did, to keep track of them that way. But he liked this German prisoner. All he had to do was go and check him out. My brother could just check him out and write down the reason he checked him out. My brother let him sleep in his tent with him and carried him to the movies with him. After the war was over and everything was settled, he was going back to Paris and reopen his store.

ND: I wonder, did he keep track of him after he came home?

Mr. Baxter: No.

ND: My granddaddy when I was a youngster, he would buy a season ticket to the Chataugua, both he and me. And each night he and I would walk the town and take in the Chataugua and walk home. Do you remember any of the programs?

Mr. Baxter: Sure.

ND: What were some of them?

Mr. Baxter: Chataugua was organized as I understand by two Methodist ministers, I may be wrong about that, up on Lake Champlain.

They said let's organize and send these tents down to small towns that hadn't had access to plays and operas and music and science and lectures. That's what they sent down here to New Bern to buy a season ticket. They put on a program at night. But in the morning they had a program for young people. You could go over there and they had a program for young people, the children.

ND: It always took place in the summer time?

Mr. Baxter: Yes. They put the tent up on the school ground.

ND: Yeah, that's where they were. Right in front of where the Moses Griffin building is today is where they put that tent.

Mr. Baxter: You're right. I remember one electrician came and carried on electrical experiments. I remember one thing. He had a loop of wire and he could move that through the air and cut the magnetic lines that created current flow to a light that would light. I remember that was one of them.

ND: The thing I remember is Hawaiian music, you know, playing the guitars and grass skirts dancing and so forth. I remember that.

Mr. Baxter: I should have remembered that, but I didn't.

ND: They had the lectures. I remember the lectures. We'd stay for the whole business.

Mr. Baxter: They had the Shakespeare play, "Taming of the Shrew." One of the lectures they gave, I can't remember his name to save my life, he was coming around giving a lecture, "Acres of Diamonds."

ND: I think I've read that lecture somewhere.

Mr. Baxter: It's a classic. You can buy them at most any

bookstore. I can buy them down there or they can order this book, Acres of Diamonds.

ND: And you heard the man give that speech?

Mr. Baxter: I heard him give the lecture. He started off by saying that this wasn't the first time he had been to New Bern. That he was an officer in Burnside's Army. After Fort Macon fell and they landed on the mainland, they came on up to New Bern by the old dirt road. They came to this little town that had a few houses and a bridge across it. It was a wooden bridge of course. They drove the rebels back across this wooden bridge and set up a camp. He had a little orderly who did his washing and fixed his bed and kept his tent in shape. This little boy would get down on his knees at night by his cot and say his prayers. He said he was a vain man, but he wasn't a Christian, and that he'd curse the little boy and throw his boots at him. He said he really was hard on the boy. He said he had a sword that he thought a lot of. He told the boy to never let that sword out of his sight. They just set up tent when the rebels made a surprise attack on them and drove them back across that bridge. The rebels was going across that bridge and they managed to set it afire to keep the rebels from advancing on them. They retreated across this bridge and this little boy remembered he had forgot the sword in his tent.

He ran across that bridge with it on fire and got the sword and started back across the bridge. Both sides stopped firing. Both sides shouted to the boy not to cross the bridge. Both sides stopped firing. The boy went ahead and crossed the bridge and delivered the sword to this

officer. But he was burnt so bad that it cost him his life. Later on, he kept thinking about how faithful that boy was and he repented and became a Baptist minister. He was going around then giving lectures to pay tuition for poor boys to go through college. The college was Temple University.

ND: In Philadelphia.

Mr. Baxter: In Philadelphia. I don't know whether he had anything to do with the building of the college or not. Nat Baxter's wife had a niece. We were talking and she said she graduated from Temple University. Right away I remembered that and I asked her had she ever heard of this man. She said, "Yes. I don't know a thing about him but his statue is at the main entrance to Temple University."

ND: That was a very interesting story.

Mr. Baxter: Yes.

ND: And that guy served in New Bern during the Civil War.

Mr. Baxter: Yeah. The War Between the States. Go wash your mouth out with Octagon soap. (laughter) I got that on record, didn't I? (laughter)

ND: Oh yeah. By the way, one other thing I want to ask you about, do you remember when Centenary Methodist Church was located on New Street?

Mr. Baxter: No.

ND: What year was the new church built, the sanctuary they use today?

Mr. Baxter: They say it was built 1904 and dedicated 1905.

ND: I've heard that Sunday morning that they raised the money to build that building. They got the whole \$35,000 in one Sunday morning session.

Mr. Baxter: I don't know about that.

ND: That \$35,000 was enough money to build Centenary Methodist Church in those days and that they raised that money right in one Sunday morning. I've heard that.

Mr. Baxter: I don't doubt it cause a lot of our members are Blades, the Buntings.

ND: The Slaters?

Mr. Baxter: They went to the Episcopal church. Old Joe Slater, they slipped I reckon. They went to the Presbyterian church. A good many of these that owned sawmills, they could raise it.

ND: Lumber business was a big thing here.

Mr. Baxter: I heard this. At the turn of the century there were over a hundred sawmills in New Bern.

ND: You remember Rowland Lumber Company? It was first called Roper and later called Rowland Lumber Company. It just covered the whole riverside end of town. And it ran night and day.

Mr. Baxter: On the bed, log, there was band saws that ran a log through and it cut it going. It would move over automatically and run it back to cut the log up going and coming.

ND: Evidently, it had teeth on both sides.

Mr. Baxter: Teeth on both sides.

ND: That was a big, big mill. I remember the morning that New

Bern caught on fire, December 2, 1922. The fire started at Rowland Lumber Company. That's what delayed the firemen getting around to fighting it out there in the colored section. When they finally got out there, the fire had just gone mad. But beginning in the morning, they had a fire at the Roland Lumber Company.

Mr. Baxter: That's right. I was there.

ND: You were? Do you remember that railroad that used to come in every day with a load of lumber? It came right where Riverside Hardware is sitting today.

Mr. Baxter: Yes.

ND: Everyday. I didn't know where they found so many logs.

Mr. Baxter: Do you remember there would be a little boat puffing away, a single cylinder? I imagine it about a ten horse Lathrop or Bridgeport. A boat coming up Neuse River dragging some raft of logs. The raft must have been a half a mile long. I mean a half a mile long.

ND: I remember it. That old boat would go "Putt, putt, putt, putt, putt, putt, putt, putt." My baby.

Mr. Baxter: Inside the cylinder something would come up and hit and make the spark. That's where the spark was made. The reason the fishermen like it, a wave could come and wash over the boat and the ignition would just keep right on going.

ND: It didn't short it out.

Mr. Baxter: That's right.

ND: There was a family named Sutton. Old Mr. Sutton was named

Ed and Frank was his boy. They lived out in Riverside. He was one of the big shots out there at the mill, superintendent or something of the kind. He saved out the best lumber that went through there and built that nice house which is sitting there today just as solid as it was then when he built it years and years and years ago.

Mr. Baxter: Where is that?

ND: Here in Riverside. Ed Sutton's house. Frank lived in it after his daddy died, really until Frank died. Let's see what else do we have here we want to talk about. Did you ever have anything to do with the Boy Scouts in Centenary?

Mr. Baxter: Sure.

ND: It says down here that Mr. B. M. Potter was the Scout Master of Troop 13. Dr. Hand had a group. Remember C. Green the newspaper man?

Mr. Baxter: Yes.

ND: What did you do? Were you a Scout Master?

Mr. Baxter: I believe I got my Scout Master card.

ND: Got your Scout card!

Mr. Baxter: I might be able to find it.

ND: Well, well, well. It kind of reminds me of these baseball cards that are so expensive. How about that! Son of a gun. B. M. Potter's name is still in there. 1933, it says here. Right? Well, well, well, that's interesting. Senior patrol leader. In 1923, you were senior patrol leader. In '21-'22, you were a patrol leader. A First Class scout in 1922. A Second Class scout in 1922. Qualified

as a Tenderfoot November 1931, when you got in. I was just graduating high school then. I graduated in 1930. That's interesting Bill. So you knew all those guys;

C. Green, B. M. Potter, Dr. Hand. Dr. Hand had a separate group.

Mr. Baxter: He had a different scout group. This was Troop 2. We needed a scout master. I've forgotten the name of the scout master we had in Troop 2. Kenneth Jones looked around and found Mr. B. M. Potter who was a surveyor.

ND: As a matter of fact, he surveyed this land out here. The map of my property out here, the whole Glenburnnie area, was surveyed by him in 1913. The year I was born in fact.

Mr. Baxter: He was, I would say, about the best scout master we've had.

ND: He lasted for years and years and years too, didn't he?

Mr. Baxter: Yes. He was a surveyor.

ND: C. Green was a newspaper man and he wrote kind of a humorous columns and so forth, didn't he?

Mr. Baxter: Yes.

ND: Did he work for the Sun Journal or which paper did he work for?

Mr. Baxter: There wasn't but one.

ND: One time there was a weekly here that Harlow Waldrop had.

Mr. Baxter: Yes. I don't think that was it. Also, there was a weekly paper The Looking Glass edited by Joe McDaniel.

ND: The Mirror.



Mr. Baxter: That's right, The Mirror.

ND: That's right. Joe was quite a card. (laughter)

Mr. Baxter: Have you got any dope on him?

ND: I haven't, but somebody to be sure will have some dope on him cause he's quite a character from New Bern. All his entertainments he had at Christmas, you know?

Mr. Baxter: Sure.

ND: Big performance there every Christmas. I don't know how much money he took in.

Mr. Baxter: He lived across the street from me.

ND: He never learned to drive a car. His wife did all the driving.

Mr. Baxter: He was this way. That little house on the corner, they lived there. They put it up for home tours and the house was crowded. One old lady from somewhere came up and said, "Mr. Daniels, have they got anymore antiques?" He said, "There's one more antique. Just as you came in the door there, there's another door. If you pull that door open, you'll see a coat hanging there. That's my overcoat. It's antique." (laughter) Now, that's Joe.

ND: He was a card. He was an interesting fellow. He really was. Never learned to drive a car. A smart man really. He wasn't much of a business man but he had a good mind, a real sharp brain.

Do you remember the big Pepsi-Cola office building across the street from the school ground?

Mr. Baxter: Sure.

ND: That building that would have been a beautiful place for

a museum and they tore it down and hauled it away.

Mr. Baxter: My brother was interested in it. He wanted it the worst in the world.

ND: He wanted that building?

Mr. Baxter: He wanted to get it for a museum. He was the only one I ever knew of that was ever interested in it. Of course, he went down to Pamlico County and organized one down there.

ND: It's a shame that building got torn down. It was a remarkable building and would have been a fine piece of something to have preserved.

Mr. Baxter: The Pepsi-Cola people could have turned it into a museum.

ND: I would of thought so. I really would.

Mr. Baxter: And they'd have had the money to back it up with.

ND: That's another one of the things that New Bern missed. It's kind of like some of those buildings on East Front Street that got knocked down.

Mr. Baxter: There are some really wonderful old buildings; like, the Queen Anne's and The Lion's - tore them down.

ND: Frank Efird I understand knocked it down and he was going to knock down the one next door to it but the historical people got a hold of him and stopped that. Over there across the street where Dr. Daniels lived and Mrs. McCarthy and all those nice houses were all torn down and replaced with those apartments. But I think that's one of the wonderful contributions that the Historical Society is

making in New Bern is restoring so many nice buildings. For example, on Pollock Street from Tryon Palace and on down that way was about to become a slum and now it's an excellent part of town. Beautiful.

Most every building has been remodernized and it looks good. Really good. Also another spot in town that was getting pretty well run down was down on Johnson and Metcalf. The Masonic Theater corner on down and then Metcalf, that was getting to be pretty much of a slummy territory. Now that's all modernized and looking good. I'm real happy about that.

Mr. Baxter: I've got to do something to my house as soon as I can get some money.

ND: It's so expensive. Very expensive. (changes topic) He was mayor you know.

Mr. Baxter: Leon Scott. I put him up very high. He's one of the best mayors New Bern ever had.

ND: I thought so too.

Mr. Baxter: He bucked the machine and of course that was the end of him.

ND: Yeah.

Mr. Baxter: I don't mind telling you that.

ND: That's good. I agree with you.

Mr. Baxter: You know they sank an oil well at Havelock.

ND: Yeah, I remember that. Did he get anything out of it? What was the outcome of it all?

Mr. Baxter: They capped it over. I don't know who did it. I

used to go down to Camp Bryan on furloughs hunting and it was there.

ND: I seem to recall that they got some oily stuff out of the bottom of it down there.

Mr. Baxter: They could have. But all over here you know is that marl. One time they were planning on putting up a marl plant to make cement.

ND: I remember that.

Mr. Baxter: Cause the river is full of it. I mean all over everywhere is this marl.

ND: I've put down several wells on this piece of property I'm on since I've been here and you had to drive into that marl. It's the best water down there too to be sure. Delightful water. Good drinking water. Very satisfactory. You remember Harry Jacobs?

Mr. Baxter: Yes.

ND: He was quite a politician. He organized a group of young men for mayor years ago and I joined. I was working for the Sun Journal. I think it was in the late thirties. I think he got elected. After that, that group of young men became the beginning of the Jaycee club. I was one of the founding members of the Jaycees myself.

Mr. Baxter: Harry Jacobs also had a shoe store in High Point.

ND: Oh, he did? I didn't know that. Do you remember the flu epidemic of World War I?

Mr. Baxter: That's what I got now.

ND: No, you haven't. That was a serious time. A lot of people died with that.

Mr. Baxter: We were living in Kinston. They closed all the schools and turned them into hospitals. They say they could go out in the country to a farmhouse and everybody would be dead in it. They didn't have much to treat it with. They had carbolic acid. They used a lot of that.

END OF TAPE