

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

LILLIAN CAMPBELL FOY STITH
(MRS. LAURENCE STITH)

INTERVIEW 1048

This is Dr. Joseph Patterson representing the Memories of New Bern Committee. My number is 1000. I am interviewing Mrs. Lillian Foy, F-o-y, Stith, S-t-i-t-h, (Mrs. Laurence, L-a-u-r-e-n-c-e, Stith) at her home at 201 Johnson Street in New Bern. The number of the interview is 1048. The date is March 15, 1993.

Sis, the tape is on and it's all set to say that I'm here at your beautiful home talking to you. I might just say this is an old home in New Bern with much history behind it. In the Civil War, General Burnside, you've got that, ok.

MRS. STITH: I've written a little bit down here.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, let me ask you Sis, just about, let me just ask you about yourself. First of all, what is your full name?

MRS. STITH: My full name, you don't even know it, do you? Lillian Campbell Foy Stith.

DR. PATTERSON: When were you born?

MRS. STITH: 1909.

DR. PATTERSON: Where?

MRS. STITH: Right, in the house you used to live. Right on East Front Street.

DR. PATTERSON: At what's now 611 East Front Street.

MRS. STITH: Yeah, and let's say you lived there too.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes, I lived there too and you were born upstairs.

MRS. STITH: I don't know where I was born.

DR. PATTERSON: I'm told you were born upstairs where there's a bathroom now adjoining a bedroom.

MRS. STITH: Is that right?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MRS. STITH: Well, I never knew that before. My sister probably told you that.

DR. PATTERSON: Who was your physician, do you know?

MRS. STITH: Well, it was either Uncle Joe Rhem or Dr. Pollock. See.

DR. PATTERSON: What were your parents names?

MRS. STITH: My mother's name was Lillian Fowler Foy and my father's name was Claude Bennett Foy.

DR. PATTERSON: Where were they from?

MRS. STITH: Well, my mother was from New Bern and my father too. They both were from New Bern.

DR. PATTERSON: Can you tell me something about them, where, what they did?

MRS. STITH: Well, well, not actually, except that they were my dearest parents, I'll tell you. And

DR. PATTERSON: Sis, what was your mother's maiden name?

MRS. STITH: Fowler.

DR. PATTERSON: Fowler. Can you look back and trace any connection to the Simmons family in your background?

MRS. STITH: I just know this that my father was crazy about your Senator Simmons and so was my grandfather and they were quite close, and I think there is some kinship there, really.

DR. PATTERSON: There is some kinship. I wondered if you could

tell me where it came in.

MRS. STITH: I can't. Now see Sister has gone into all of that, but now, and she has it. I don't think Aggie has it, but I think Sister has it and she has really done a lot of work on it. And she had one of these and spent the whole day before she got sick. And hadn't turned it on. She spent the whole day at it and she was sick.

DR. PATTERSON: Oh, what a tragedy.

MRS. STITH: It was a tragedy.

DR. PATTERSON: Sis, what did your father do?

MRS. STITH: He worked for a company out of New York, a paint company and he was with them for years and then he was in the business that my grandfather was in and that was something out in Pollocksville and I declare, I was so young, I don't know. I really don't remember.

DR. PATTERSON: How long did you all live in this house on East Front Street?

MRS. STITH: I think maybe until I was about a year. I don't think it was any older, I was any older than that. And then we moved where on Middle Street. I won't say the pink house, but it's awful looking.

DR. PATTERSON: Which house is it?

MRS. STITH: Next to the Munger house. You see Grandpa fixed that, built that and my grandmother...

DR. PATTERSON: This is on...

MRS. STITH: On Middle Street.

DR. PATTERSON: On Middle Street.

MRS. STITH: On Middle Street. The Foy Munger house.

DR. PATTERSON: Sort of across from the Pollock house.

MRS. STITH: Well, no. I'm talking about the Foy Munger house first.

That is where, I don't think I lived there, because I think the other house was built, you see, because my grandfather built that one too.

'Cause my grandmother felt like that the Foy Munger house was just not large enough. It was, but anyway he built this other house for her. And then when Pop and Mama moved around there, that's when I, so I was about a year old, something like that.

DR. PATTERSON: You had, what brothers and sisters. What are the names of your siblings?

MRS. STITH: My oldest brother was Payton Foy, and my youngest brother was Louis Fowler Foy, and then my sister, Agnes Foy Barden. Just the three of us, four of us.

DR. PATTERSON: So you moved from the Munger house across the street...

MRS. STITH: Uh uh, right next door.

DR. PATTERSON: Right next door.

MRS. STITH: See he built the house

DR. PATTERSON: That's right. That's right. I'm getting mixed up.

MRS. STITH: Right next door.

DR. PATTERSON: That's where the Marine lives now.

MRS. STITH: I don't know who lives there.

DR. PATTERSON: I think there's a nurse from Cherry Point who

was over in the Persian Gulf affair and he came back.

MRS. STITH: The one that's in there now?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MRS. STITH: 'Cause it's been sold I don't know how many times since we got rid of it.

DR. PATTERSON: So that's really where you spent most of your younger years is it?

MRS. STITH: Oh, my younger years and then Laurence and I lived there too you know.

DR. PATTERSON: No, I didn't know that.

MRS. STITH: We did. We lived there until, what year? In fact, I spent most of my days there really. I can't remember the year we moved. Well, I'll tell you. It was when his father died and Mary and his mother were across the river over at Stithwyck so we moved over there and stayed there until we came here.

DR. PATTERSON: When were you and Laurence married, Sis?

MRS. STITH: 1931, October.

DR. PATTERSON: And you have two children?

MRS. STITH: Yes, two boys. Laurence Stith, Jr., and Blackwell Stith.

DR. PATTERSON: And Laurence lives in Beaufort now, is it?

MRS. STITH: Morehead.

DR. PATTERSON: Morehead, and Blackie lives right next door.

MRS. STITH: Right in the dependency for this house.

DR. PATTERSON: And he's gotten married in the last few years

and has a new baby.

MRS. STITH: And he's got the cutest baby. He's precious.

DR. PATTERSON: You're proud of that grandchild.

MRS. STITH: I really am. He is just darling.

DR. PATTERSON: Laurence, when you met Laurence was he practicing law already?

MRS. STITH: I've known him all my life.

DR. PATTERSON: You grew up with him?

MRS. STITH: No, I didn't grow up with him. He was Louis Foy's age and Laurence would come around at the house. You know how boys will do. I just thought he was great then, but I was just little Sis. You know? There wasn't but five years difference, but five years difference at one time means a lot. So, no, he, I dated him, you know, off and on. And then when I came back from school and he came back home to practice law is when we really started to going together. And got married.

DR. PATTERSON: And you moved across the Neuse.

MRS. STITH: No, we stayed right home.

DR. PATTERSON: You stayed home and then eventually you moved...

MRS. STITH: We had an apartment there.

DR. PATTERSON: In the house next to the Munger house?

MRS. STITH: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: And then you left there and moved across the Neuse River?

MRS. STITH: Uh huh. You know where Loulie and David Henderson

live?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MRS. STITH: See they bought Stithwyck. I bet you've never seen it have you? Have you ever seen it? It's awfully pretty.

DR. PATTERSON: Oh sure, sure, yes, yes, yes.

MRS. STITH: And we stayed there several years and then when we came back, we moved here.

DR. PATTERSON: And you've been in this house now for about how long?

MRS. STITH: Early sixties.

DR. PATTERSON: You love this house I'll bet.

MRS. STITH: I think it's great. I really do.

DR. PATTERSON: Its I guess the pride of New Bern.

MRS. STITH: Well, it's comfortable and it's, we've just enjoyed it. Whenever we lived with Blackie, just before Laurence died, we went over there and spent about five or six years, because Blackie was real nice. He wanted that house. So he bought that from Bill Bynum. See Bill lived there for a long time. And so Blackie was over there and he wanted us to come because he knew that his daddy could get out without having to use a lot of steps which made it so he never gave up. You see, he worked right up to the bitter end which he loved.

And so, after Blackie decided to get married, I said, well, I'll just go right next door and they couldn't be nicer. They sort of look out for me and see that I'm alright, you know.

DR. PATTERSON: And you live here alone in this house now. Sis,

I'm going to check to make sure this is all recording.

MRS. STITH: Ok.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, Sis, we see you, Alice and I see you sometimes in the evening. We walk a lot and we walk by your house and we can see the top of your head as you're watching your tv. So we know everything is alright.

MRS. STITH: That's what Blackie does when he drives in. He sees my white head there. He knows I'm alright.

DR. PATTERSON: When you grew up in the house on Middle Street, did you go to school at Central School?

MRS. STITH: Yes I did.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you walk to school?

MRS. STITH: Yes I did, and you know this, Mr. Fillingame, was his name, used to be the bell ringer. What would you call that?

DR. PATTERSON: Well he sort of took care of the buildings. He was a maintenance man, I think.

MRS. STITH: Well he did. He was, but he always rang the bell too. You know, in the mornings and any other time. And he would see me hit that school green in the mornings and he'd ring that bell 'til he knew I was in my room, because I'd be late, you know, getting out and he really did. And you know, not too long ago, I was in a dress shop in New Bern and this granddaughter of his knew, you know, that I used to know him. So I was real glad, because I thought I never would forget him, and I won't. 'Cause he really did. He saved me a lot of times having to stay in the afternoons, you know, which I

would have.

DR. PATTERSON: As I recall he had a house on the school green he lived in behind the building.

MRS. STITH: He did. Right behind the bell building. Don't you remember? Right there.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. Yes, I remember that.

MRS. STITH: And the heat, the furnace was in that building also that heated all those buildings. You remember that?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. Who were some of your playmates in your neighborhood?

MRS. STITH: Well, Emily Pollock was across the street and then I went with Bay and Teeny, Meta McCotter, Meta Moore, and just all that crowd like that.

DR. PATTERSON: What do you remember about school days? Do you remember you teachers?

MRS. STITH: Miss Brock. I remember her, definitely. She was red headed.

DR. PATTERSON: What grade did she teach?

MRS. STITH: I believe that was about the sixth or the seventh. And Miss Molly Heath. I remember her.

DR. PATTERSON: What was Miss Molly like?

MRS. STITH: Great, and I wasn't scared of her. You know how as first graders you always are, but she was such a nice person. And you remember Miss Annie Chadwick or had she died before you came along?

DR. PATTERSON: I don't remember her.

MRS. STITH: I reckon she had died. Well, she had eyes in the back of her head and if you were in the back of the room talking, she would know exactly who it was talking. But she was a grand teacher. She really was. Miss Annie Chadwick. And right this minute I can't think of another one.

DR. PATTERSON: How did you all dress those days when you went to school?

MRS. STITH: Well, Lord, Joe Pat, it's been so long ago. I can't. I started to say middy blouses, but in playing basketball that's what we'd wear for that. You know. And bloomers then for basketball.

DR. PATTERSON: So you went right through high school there and you played a lot of basketball did you?

MRS. STITH: Until I hurt my knee then I had to stop.

DR. PATTERSON: Where did you play?

MRS. STITH: Well, you remember the, Frank Dunn owns it now.

DR. PATTERSON: Stanley Hall.

MRS. STITH: Stanly Hall. That's right. We used to play up there, and...

DR. PATTERSON: The Ghent Casino. Did you play there?

MRS. STITH: No, I never played out there that I can remember. And I remember we were down at Stonewall when I hurt my knee, and I never played any more much after that.

DR. PATTERSON: Where did you go after high school? What did you do?

MRS. STITH: I went to Salem and then I went to Peace. And then

I decided I wanted to come home which I did. And I worked at the bank.

DR. PATTERSON: What bank, Sis?

MRS. STITH: Eastern Bank. I was there when we were having all the trouble. I worked there then. You know, for the depression when they closed. And I never will forget that time.

DR. PATTERSON: Let me interrupt for just a minute, Sis. You have been so good about writing down things to speak about. I believe it would make this easier for you if I just said to you, Sis, why don't you take your notes and you just talk and tell me what you want to tell about New Bern. And then I may ask you some more questions after that. Or I may interrupt you and ask questions. So this is going to be Sis talking to you now.

MRS. STITH: Should I start with the swimming meet? I mean, just like that.

DR. PATTERSON: Start with the first thing on your list.

MRS. STITH: Well, this was about in 1920, I'll say. And it was my first swimming meet which was held at the New Bern Country Club and Miss Jackie Miller, a very pretty young lady that was really gotten in New Bern to teach her swimming class. Our classes were held over in James City from the EH and JA Meadows Fertilizer Company Factory and this was really the only place in New Bern to go swimming except the Country Club. And I remember at that time, we boys and girls were not wanted to use the water for swimming in New Bern due to the sewage system and when our lessons were over we then had the meet out at the Country Club. And Mr. Mark Stevenson was one of the judges giving

the blue ribbons and I was trying to get a blue ribbon along with several other girls for treading water. And at the end, we were at the end of the pier with the judges eyeing us carefully and Mr. Stevenson said to me, said, Sis, aren't you sitting on a stump? Everybody had a good laugh. He was such an attractive man. Anyway, I got my blue ribbon.

Then I can remember so well Dr. and Mrs. Earl Sloan and my father, Claude B. Foy, and mother, Lillian Fowler Foy, were friends. Dr. Sloan was the maker of Sloan's Liniment. My father told Dr. Sloan about the property he bought, on which he built his beautiful home. Dr. Sloan was the first one to build a fine home out the Country Club way around 1920 to 1925. He owned a big limousine, and it was big. He also built that narrow brick road. You remember that. Before they had the wide, or rather the road they have out there now. Oh, for years, it was just one of those little narrow brick roads. To enable him to come to New Bern.

DR. PATTERSON: This brick road went all the way from the Sloan Estate to New Bern and he built it.

MRS. STITH: That's right. That's my understanding. Dr. Sloan also liked the sound of frogs. So he imported some and had them placed on his property. I remember so well as a little girl around 14 years old going to see Mrs. Sloan with my mother on her at home afternoons. Mother and I were first arriving at her home as she was coming down the steps, the beautiful stairway out at her home. She was dressed in a black velvet dress with a long train trailing down the steps.

I thought, oh, when I grow up, I am going to have a long velvet train, but you know, I've never had one, though my home is at 201 Johnson Street since 1960, the Slover-Bradham-Guion-Stith Home built around 1840. I could have easily worn a train for the stairway in this old house would make a perfect setting. This house served as the department headquarters for General A. E. Burnside of the Federal Army and other local commanders of the federal department of North Carolina after the capture of New Bern on March 14, 1862 by northern troops during the War Between the States. In the closet, in the library, there's a hospital report written on the wall by the union soldiers that can be seen and read today. I have often said this house was well taken care of by the ones who occupied it during the war. And that really is the truth because it was, evidently must have been taken care of.

I mean, there's no, you know, cut up places on the woodwork or anything like that anywhere that I've ever seen. Laurence Stith and I were married in 1931. We received a wedding check from Mrs. Sloan who had moved back to Boston after Dr. Sloan's death. The check was for \$25 which at that time was a lot of money. If you remember, 1931 was during the depression. Cooks and help could be employed for \$2.50 a week.

In 1928 and 1929 I was working at the Eastern Bank and Trust Company when all the banks in New Bern closed except the Eastern Bank and Trust Company. The morning the bank closed I was taking insufficient checks back to the stores that had deposited them into the bank. It was a terrible morning. I saw so many people crying. They had no money and just didn't know really where their next meal was coming from.

I remember I was going to Maxwell Wholesale Store at the foot of Middle Street across the street from where the Sheraton Hotel now stands.

I was in front of Lucas and Lewis' Wholesale Store situated where Wachovia Bank and Trust Company is now except Lucas and Lewis faced Middle Street instead of South Front Street now Tryon Palace Drive.

All of a sudden I heard a loud yell. It was Mr. Maxwell. Everyone was frantic and in that state of mind, I didn't tarry long or try to make conversation as usual. I placed the check on his desk and left.

I returned to the bank and it wasn't long before Mrs. Katie Spencer came in and wanted to go into her lock box and Mr. W. C. Chadwick let her in the vault. He worked there also. When she came out of the vault with a tray full of money, he said let me cover your tray with paper, Mrs. Spencer. There's so many people in the lobby. To Mr. Chadwick's surprise she told him no, she was depositing the money and no need to cover. Well, she did not know the situation of the bank's closing at that time, but our bank did close, well, some while after that.

DR. PATTERSON: Did she deposit the money?

MRS. STITH: She deposited the money. Yes she did and she told him, she says, I don't plan to take the money out. I'm going to deposit it and that was much to his surprise.

Around the late 1940's, I'll say 1944 or '45, Trent Pines which was originally Sloan's Estate was owned and managed by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Miles. It was a lovely place to go for dinner or lunch or for horseback riding, swimming and skiing, or boating. I remember how

the young good looking Marines would come from Cherry Point on Saturday nights. A whole crowd of us would gather around the piano and sing by the hours. They were the first Marines to come to Cherry Point for Cherry Point was just beginning and I often think how young they were and didn't return. So many never returned.

I remember the air show at New Bern airport dedicated in 1931 and attended by U. S. Senator F. M. Simmons. During the air show, which was part of the program, Lieutenant Nott, U. S. Army Flying Service was killed in a crash. I was there and will never forget the horror of seeing the plane fall creating a huge hole in the earth and killing a very handsome young man. I had met him not too long before he took off in his plane. It was a very sad event for the show.

DR. PATTERSON: Sis, may I interrupt and just ask you about that. How did you happen to meet him at that time.

MRS. STITH: We were all just standing around, you know, and people were milling around. And I don't know how, I've forgotten how it happened, but we all just have, you know, and he was with a whole lot of other people.

DR. PATTERSON: Florie speaks of meeting him the night before at a dance at the Elks Club. Does that ring a bell with you?

MRS. STITH: I don't remember that. I mean, if I was there, I don't, I mean, you know, my mind, but I just remember...

DR. PATTERSON: You are the first person who has told us about this encounter.

MRS. STITH: Is that right? Well, I knew him. And I'm pretty

sure I met him at the what you call it because I don't remember being at the Elks Club. You want any more?

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah, go on.

MRS. STITH: And I remember how pretty the U. S. Cutter was when docked at the end of Mrs. C. H. Ashford's yard. As teenagers we used to visit on the cutter. Bay and Teeny and a whole crowd, Meta and all of us would go over there and they were always just as nice to us as they could be. And it's a shame they didn't keep that because it was pretty.

I remember how we used to skate on the sidewalks. Our special place was at the Methodist Church corner on Middle and New Street. The pavement was wider and the steps down from the lower part of the church not so high. We could skate down 'em. Had a grand time. That was when the James. A. Bryan home was across Middle Street from the Methodist Church. Now you boys don't remember that.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes, oh yes.

MRS. STITH: Do you remember it?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MRS. STITH: Well, you "ain't" so old, you "ain't", so, you're not too far behind me are you?

DR. PATTERSON: Well, I'm 76. Just put me in the right...

MRS. STITH: But you can remember that?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes, oh yes.

MRS. STITH: It was a show place. It was just a beautiful place. They had this high brick wall around it and it covered half that block.

Don't you remember how it went through the whole block and then half of the block. It was just huge and the yard was beautiful.

DR. PATTERSON: When I walked to school, I used to get up on that wall and walk as far as I could.

MRS. STITH: That's what I just said in here. That when the... The James A. Bryan house was across from the Methodist Church and now has been replaced by the once beautiful New Bern Post Office, now Federal Building. And it doesn't look as pretty as it did when it was the Post Office 'cause it looks like it needs fixing. Well, anyway, the James A. Bryan home was a showplace of New Bern until the post office was placed there. And the Bryan homesite moved to New Street across from the Presbyterian Church and used as a library for many years until moved to George Street to be used with the Tryon Palace.

The James A. Bryan lot with his home and several different buildings covered one half block. I've already said this. With a high brick wall around the lot on which we used to as children love to walk on.

That's the truth. I've done it many times. And I tell you something else that I remember so well. Do you all remember Mr. Hugh Lovett.

He was at the Athens Theater. you remember the Athens Theater. You remember that too, darling? Now how old are you, Freddy?

MR. LATHAM: Sixty nine.

MRS. STITH: And you do remember the Athens. Well, of course, it's Bradbury's now.

MR. LATHAM: From the Athens to the Show Shop.

MRS. STITH: Yeah, that's right. Well, you don't remember Mr.,

you remember Mr. Kehoe?

MR. LATHAM: Yes.

MRS. STITH: Alright. When Mr. Lovett used to have it they lived right in the house next to the Christian Science Church, and he used to have this electric switch. You know how the steps go down. Every time we'd go, we'd worry the life out of him. We'd turn the light on every time, you know, to his front porch. And he was so nice. He would never get mad at us, but if we'd made him turn that light on once we have a million times. And let me see. What else did I think about. I think that's just about, but, oh I do remember this and I know you boys remember this too, because when New Bern had just the brick pavement? You know for the street. It was a lot cooler and then they covered it with tar. And then it, you really could tell the difference, 'cause it would hold heat. Now that's the truth.

DR. PATTERSON: Sis, were most of the streets in New Bern brick streets then?

MRS. STITH: Yes, they really were, as well as I can remember. And I remember Metcalf Street had oysters shells, you know. I remember that in particular with oyster shells. I mean, they were, they were nice, because I mean, they go, ride on them and you know, have them.

DR. PATTERSON: Was Middle Street brick?

MRS. STITH: Uh huh.

DR. PATTERSON: And Johnson Street?

MRS. STITH: Yes, I'm pretty sure. That's right. And Middle, all of Middle Street, and I imagine Broad Street too.

DR. PATTERSON: Is that light bothering you, Sis?

MRS. STITH: Yes.

DR. PATTERSON: Now we're back on, Sis. Now it's back on again, Sis.

MRS. STITH: You remember Martha, the vegetable woman. Do you remember her?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MRS. STITH: I used to love Martha and she'd go by just hollering, you know, not hard, but she'd be singing, her vegetables. Do you remember that, Joe Pat?

DR. PATTERSON: Early in the morning.

MRS. STITH: That's right.

MR. LATHAM: Nice collard greens.

MRS. STITH: Huh, did you say something?

MRS. STITH: I said nice collard greens.

MRS. STITH: She was really grand, honestly. Well, cut that off a minute and I'll tell you what.

DR. PATTERSON: Sis, those stories are wonderful. Let me ask you about some other things. When you grew up in New Bern, did you go to dances very much?

MRS. STITH: I sure did.

DR. PATTERSON: Tell me about that.

MRS. STITH: Well, it was just great and I remember we used to go to the warehouses, you see. That's where they used to have a lot of the dances, the big dances when the big bands that would come to

New Bern.

DR. PATTERSON: Where were these warehouses, Sis.

MRS. STITH: Well, now let me see. One was out there on National Avenue across where they have a lot of the railroad crossings. Now where would that be. Help me, 'cause I don't know how to tell you except at the end of George Street, you know, going down George Street.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes I know. The railroad crossing locates it very well.

MRS. STITH: Right there and the house was right in that warehouse to the right. And they were always great dances.

DR. PATTERSON: Who were some of the bands who came down. Do you remember some of the names of any of them?

MRS. STITH: You know I cannot

DR. PATTERSON: But they were well known

MRS. STITH: Except the ones we used to go to Morehead, to the Atlantic Hotel. And Cab Calloway I remember was one for that.

DR. PATTERSON: I was there.

MRS. STITH: Won't that good?

DR. PATTERSON: Yep.

MRS. STITH: You were there for a lot of them, Joe Pat, for down there. And I remember I never could go to the June German. Mama would never let me go. She says an all night dance, no, I don't think so.

And she would let me always go to Saturday night dances down at Morehead and we'd come back. See, because that's when you could go down there in your car and come on back that same night. So I didn't mind it

much because that night after the June German was all night long, the girls would be so tired they could not enjoy the dance down there on Saturday night. And I want to tell you I had the time of my life.

I really did. And, but I really was awfully sorry I never made the June German. Did you go?

DR. PATTERSON: I went to some of them.

MRS. STITH: Did you ever go to the June German?

MR. LATHAM: I wasn't much of a dancer.

MRS. STITH: Well, you missed a lot, baby. You really did, but anyway. No, I really did. I used to love to dance.

DR. PATTERSON: Who were some of the folks in your crowd that would go to these dances? Did you travel as a crowd?

MRS. STITH: As a rule. We would have four or five couples, you know, go together. Well, D. C. and Meta, D. C. McCotter and Meta Moore, and Bay Dunn and Muse before they were married, and let me see who else, because we went together an awful lot. And let me see. I know who it was and I can't...

DR. PATTERSON: Sis, did you do any sailing?

MRS. STITH: No, I never did sail any.

DR. PATTERSON: Did folks sail, in your crowd did the folks sail?

MRS. STITH: Uh uh. Uh uh.

DR. PATTERSON: It's interesting that some crowds did and some didn't.

MRS. STITH: Some crowds did, like Tatie. You know, she always and Caroline, I think, Ashford used to go sailing a lot with her.

And I think Martha Kirven, Martha Mills. Didn't she go a lot with the crowd? 'Cause I'd always thought that she was so much younger and she's older than I am really.

DR. PATTERSON: I think her brother Clarence had a boat.

MRS. STITH: Yes, but she went with the younger crowd, you see, and that's what made me think she was younger. But, no, we never did. We used to go rowing a whole lot on East Front Street, you know, if we could find us a little rowboat. But, and it's so surprising how little way back there the water was used for boats. But no one had any, Joe Pat.

DR. PATTERSON: It sort of depended on where you lived in town I found out. If you lived on South Front Street, you stayed in the water all the time.

MRS. STITH: Yeah, but people didn't have great big boats like they have now. Isn't that right.

DR. PATTERSON: Sis, let me ask you about something a little more serious than that. You spoke of the Marines in World War II. Do you remember anything about World War I in New Bern?

MRS. STITH: Not too much. I don't, what year was that.

DR. PATTERSON: Do you remember the flu epidemic of that time?

MRS. STITH: It didn't make too much of an impression on me, Son. It really didn't.

DR. PATTERSON: What was New Bern like during World War II? Was it a busy place?

MRS. STITH: You've got me. What year was that?

DR. PATTERSON: Well, that would be from 1941 to '46. When these young Marines were coming and going out to Trent Pines.

MRS. STITH: Well, now at that time I do remember how sad we were about so many of 'em being so nice and having to go off. I do remember that.

DR. PATTERSON: I just wondered if the town was filled with Marines and people at that time.

MRS. STITH: Not as much as you'd think for, and when we'd see them would be like, as I told y'all out at the Trent Pines.

DR. PATTERSON: I've been told that during that time that the river was patrolled and protected. Do you remember anything about that?

MRS. STITH: I don't remember anything like that, Joe Pat.

DR. PATTERSON: Yeah. Ok. When you grew up in this wonderful town were there special places that you'd go out to eat, for meals, or after dances.

MRS. STITH: Well Trent Pines was really and truly was the main one.

DR. PATTERSON: There were no restaurants downtown that

MRS. STITH: Well, I remember what is the one where Bradham's Drug Store used to be?

DR. PATTERSON: The Central Cafe was right along in there.

MRS. STITH: No, that was further down wasn't it? Wasn't that on the next block? I think.

DR. PATTERSON: Ok

MRS. STITH: But I do remember Eula Waldrop's place, the Green Door, that was right across the street from Bradham's Drug Store.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, that's on the corner of Broad and Middle.

MRS. STITH: Where they have the vacant lot now.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes

MRS. STITH: Right next door to that.

DR. PATTERSON: What was the Green Door like?

MRS. STITH: It was the best food and really, we just loved it. See we just lived on, about two blocks from it. So we did go there an awful lot to eat.

DR. PATTERSON: Did they just serve one meal a day?

MRS. STITH: Everything good. No. They served two meals a day.

DR. PATTERSON: And was that there for some time?

MRS. STITH: She had the best Boston creme pie. I remember that so good.

DR. PATTERSON: That was on that corner for some time was it?

MRS. STITH: Yeah, that was a real old building and she fixed it up real nicely. And really, she had a crowd there all the time.

DR. PATTERSON: That was a very favorite memory of a lot of New Bern people.

MRS. STITH: That's right. Right. I bet a lot of people have said that to you, haven't they?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. It later moved across from the Athens Theater.

MRS. STITH: It was there first.

DR. PATTERSON: Oh, I see.

MRS. STITH: It was there first and then came on Middle Street. Mrs. Amy Williams and Eula Waldrop had it together.

DR. PATTERSON: Was this ever connected with the Episcopal Church in anyway that you know?

MRS. STITH: Not that I remember. I don't think it was.

DR. PATTERSON: Well I remember the Green Door also. I remember that.

MRS. STITH: You do.

DR. PATTERSON: Sis, looking back, you mentioned Martha selling vegetables. What other memories do you have about black people in those days. Were the relations pretty good between whites and blacks.

MRS. STITH: Excellent. I think. I mean all my dealings with them. They really were.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you have servants in your home most of the time?

MRS. STITH: Yes we did and I never will forget this one came and I was just a little girl and she asked my mother if she needed anyone. I think she had heard that mama was looking for somebody and mama says, well, what is your name. And she said Lillian Foy. And I want to tell you, I, of course I was little, but anyway, mama said that she was never so surprised in her life. She made the best lemon pie I ever put in my mouth. I'll tell you that and she was a grand cook. I never will forget her. And then we had another one named Lottie. Those two I remember so well. And she was a good one too.

But you see those days they'd come and ask for a job, you know. And it was, you'd get good cooks.

DR. PATTERSON: How much did you pay them in those days?

MRS. STITH: Well now I don't remember. I mean at that age, but as I told you during the war you could get them for \$2.50 a week and they'd stay all day long, you know. And a dollar was a dollar at that time.

DR. PATTERSON: As you came along

MRS. STITH: Did I say during the war?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MRS. STITH: Well, I meant during the depression.

DR. PATTERSON: During the depression, yes.

MRS. STITH: See that's the first year Laurence and I were married. 1931. I remember that good.

DR. PATTERSON: Who were some of the doctors you remember as you came along. Some of the physicians in town.

MRS. STITH: I remember your daddy and of course, you see...

DR. PATTERSON: Dr. Latham. You remember that.

MRS. STITH: I sure do remember Dr. Latham, because I know the time that Pop was taken sick and Sister, Laurence and I were out calling on sister and Hap that night, and mama knew that we were so she called us out there and called Dr. Latham and he went right straight to Pop. And we always said he did save his life. And I remember he told Pop to be sure and take, and eat rutabagas and I love them. Well Pop loved them too, but he ate so many of them. He said he didn't want to see

another rutabaga in his life, but they helped him. I'll tell you. But he really helped Pop a whole lot that night. Sure I remember him. And 'cause Uncle Ray, you see, being across the street, Dr. Pollock, and then, you don't remember Dr. Rhem do you?

DR. PATTERSON: No. I don't.

MRS. STITH: Well, he didn't practice an awful lot 'cause I don't think he was really too crazy about being a doctor to tell you the truth. But he did start the Shriners. That was his...

DR. PATTERSON: He started what?

MRS. STITH: The Shrine. He started that in New Bern.

DR. PATTERSON: The Shrine. Where did he live, Sis?

MRS. STITH: Do you know where the parrot was on Broad Street? Don't you know Polly Parrot?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MRS. STITH: And do you remember Jake. Used to have those two bears that he would take on a chain. Do you remember those? You may not have been old enough for that.

DR. PATTERSON: Now where was this?

MRS. STITH: That they lived on?

DR. PATTERSON: Broad Street?

MRS. STITH: On Broad Street across from a theater that was over on Broad Street that time. Right behind the cafe. See they were the only house down on Broad Street.

DR. PATTERSON: There was a theater there? A movie house?

MRS. STITH: Yes. There used to be a theater there. Pearl White.

I remember going to see her at the. But Aunt Annie and Uncle Joe had, their house was the only one down there..

DR. PATTERSON: That was pretty close to the Clark building.

MRS. STITH: It was right next to it. Right now it's a vacant lot down there. You remember.

DR. PATTERSON: And that's where the parrot was and that's where the bears were?

MRS. STITH: That's where old Polly was and when we went to Raleigh for the football game and the fire happened that day in New Bern, we were all there, and I went with Aunt Annie and Uncle Joe. I think I was around ten years old or something like that, and of course, we didn't want the boys to know about the fire or anything. And Hap was coach. Hap Barden. And all Aunt Annie could think about was her Polly.

She didn't think about her house. She didn't think about her furniture or any of her silver or anything. All she thought about was Polly.

She was so worried that Polly would get burned, you know. That's the truth. And that was some fire. Some day, children. I'll never forget it.

DR. PATTERSON: Let's go into that a little bit Sis. We have had other people talk about this fire. You went up on the train, did you?

MRS. STITH: Uh huh. A whole crowd of people.

DR. PATTERSON: What was it like coming home on that train?

MRS. STITH: Well, everybody was just worried sick, because, you see, we didn't know what it was. And when I got home, but anyway when

we got in New Bern, we walked around Metcalf Street and on up New Street like where the academy is now, you know. And really everything, I mean, you could just see things standing burning. You know what I mean. And when I got home, mother had everything packed and at the front door. And see Hap and Sister were married the next month. What month was the fire? Was it November, October, November?

MR. LATHAM: The last day of November.

MRS. STITH: It was November because they got married in December. So you see, all of her wedding clothes and the wedding presents, mama had to have them all packed, rather she did because they got just one block over. See, two blocks over on Metcalf Street. And, oh that was really an awful day. And I remember Laurence had come home from Carolina. He didn't go to the game. And he said it really was an awful day. Said you'd go to one place to see if you could help them, you know, move out and about that time then another one would go over that house to another place. And it was just awful, I'm sure. And the bell was ringing in the church. You know the Methodist Church there. Not anybody was ringing it, it was just the draft, you know. And, I'm sort of glad I wasn't here for that. It was bad enough sitting in the bleachers and worrying yourself to death about that.

DR. PATTERSON: Was it a long trip home on the train?

MRS. STITH: Yeah, pretty long, 'cause everybody was worried sick. They just didn't know what to expect.

DR. PATTERSON: The parrot, though, survived the fire. Mrs. Rhems' parrot survived the fire.

MRS. STITH: Oh yeah, because it didn't get to her house, see.

DR. PATTERSON: Didn't get that far?

MRS. STITH: No. Uh huh, but it really did get to Metcalf Street.

DR. PATTERSON: Sis, you remember any other fires in New Bern?

MRS. STITH: Yes. I remember Belk's and we'd always go to the fires when they... Everybody in town would go to fires, you know.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you say Belk's?

MRS. STITH: Yes. It was then, you remember Coplon - Smith?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MRS. STITH: Well, they were..their store was in Coplon - Smith's at that time. That's where Coplon - Smith went in there and that was a big fire. And then I remember the mill out on, which street is it, ya'll, you know, Bates Lumber Company. Before Bates Lumber Company.

MR. LATHAM: Griffin Street then at Nash and North Craven.

MRS. STITH: What darling?

MR. LATHAM: Griffin Street and then it went to North Craven.

MRS. STITH: Yeah, that's right. That was a big fire too. And really everybody would go and, during the night or anything, we'd, everybody'd get up and go look at fires. That's the truth.

DR. PATTERSON: The bells would ring and tell you the number of the location as I recall.

MRS. STITH: Well what you would really hear was that horn, that great big old heavy horn. Don't y'all remember it? Out there on the water works? Don't you remember that?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MRS. STITH: And you could hear that. Now I never hear a bell or anything like that down here, but on Middle Street we could.

DR. PATTERSON: You remember Kafer Bakery?

MRS. STITH: Yes I certainly do. That's where all my money would go when I worked in the bank, 'cause they were right there. And they cooked those good old rolls, you know. In the afternoon we could smell them. So we'd go over there and get them that afternoon.

DR. PATTERSON: And then you couldn't when it burned up?

MRS. STITH: Uh, they were on Middle Street, but I believe they were in another, a larger place if I don't, if I remember correctly, weren't they when they caught fire?

DR. PATTERSON: I think it was Middle Street, but I'm not quite sure where it was. Sis, when the bad hurricanes came through New Bern, you weren't living in this house.

MRS. STITH: No. The worst one was the...

MRS. STITH: The worst one, I don't think. Because Laurence, Jr. was born in '33 and this other one was when the water went up on...

DR. PATTERSON: Laurence? Your boy Laurence.

MRS. STITH: When the water went up to Middle Street. That was the worse year that I remember and I can't remember the year it was.

DR. PATTERSON: That was in the fifties.

MRS. STITH: Was that in the fifties?

MR. LATHAM: Ione.

MRS. STITH: Ione. That was the worst storm I believe we had.

DR. PATTERSON: You were living on Middle Street.

MRS. STITH: On Middle Street then.

DR. PATTERSON: And the water came up all the way.

MRS. STITH: All the way and it had never come there. We had never had water in the basement. And I just said to Laurence, Sr., I said, you know, I think I'll go see if there is any water in the basement because it had come up to the Middle Street. And sure enough, we had a little bit, but not enough to speak of. That was the only time that I ever saw it in the basement there. But in '33 I remember, Ludie, Lewis Foy and Laurence went out. I didn't want them to go out, because it was blowing and it was just a terrible night. But they went down and they didn't come back for some while and I was just worried. They were helping Jip Lucas move his things out of the store, right down where the Wachovia is now. They were next to the wholesale place. And, oh, it was all up in there see, the water was. So when they came back, they were fine, but they were tired 'cause they'd worked themself to death.

DR. PATTERSON: Sis, we spoke a little bit about doctors and then we kind of got away from that. You mentioned Dr. Rhem and Dr. Latham and my father. You remember any other physicians from the old days.

MRS. STITH: Well, no, because those two uncles of mine, you see. Oh, I do, well, that's not the old days. Well, it was when Blackie was a baby so, I reckon, but Francis King had moved over at Uncle Ray's office and Blackie was sick. He had a pretty high fever. So I called Dr. King and he says I'll be right over, which was wonderful. See, that's what they used to do in those days, come to see you. So he

came right over to see Blackie and I think Blackie was his first patient when he moved in that office.

DR. PATTERSON: Got him off to a good start.

MRS. STITH: He sure did.

DR. PATTERSON: What hospitals were in New Bern before St. Luke's was built?

MRS. STITH: Well, wasn't the General, New Bern General, wasn't that one?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. That's the one at the end of Middle Street.

MRS. STITH: That was Mrs. Lizzie Lee's house at one time. And then Kafer's Hospital, wasn't that another?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MRS. STITH: And, I really don't remember too many, because I tell you, thank you God, he was good to me. I didn't have....

DR. PATTERSON: Sis, do you remember many changes in downtown New Bern in the way it is now, the way it was then. How does it differ now?

MRS. STITH: Well, back there, now it's more of an open space like on Broad Street which is light, very nice and very pretty and now where the Christian Scientist Church is, there's a nice vacant lot there which is very nice, because you remember we used to have a filling station on that side and then all those little buildings right where the vacant lot is across on the right hand side going across the bridge. I mean on that side. And I don't think there's been too much change since then.

DR. PATTERSON: Was Broad Street a nice street before the traffic started going through there?

MRS. STITH: It was a lovely street. Had trees and it was just ruined when they put the bridge there. It really did, and so many people feel the same way.

DR. PATTERSON: I would think that when the traffic came across Johnson Street from the old bridge that this must have been a very busy road in front of your house.

MRS. STITH: I would think so too, but you see we didn't have a traffic like they have now, Joe Pat. And that made a lot of difference, because I remember walking across the bridge most every Sunday afternoon and not being afraid, you know.

DR. PATTERSON: That's the Neuse River Bridge at the foot of Johnson Street?

MRS. STITH: No, that was at the foot of, I mean that's where it is now. And we did walk across this one too. That's right. Gosh, I'd forgotten about that.

DR. PATTERSON: So you'd walk across the old Neuse River Bridge and the present Neuse River Bridge?

MRS. STITH: Uh uh. Uh uh. That's right.

DR. PATTERSON: To get to Bridgeton?

MRS. STITH: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: What did you find over in Bridgeton?

MRS. STITH: Well, you turned around and came back.

DR. PATTERSON: Just a nice walk.

MRS. STITH: That's right. You know Sunday afternoons, we'd go to the cemetery. I said that the other day and I don't remember who it was, said why would you go to the cemetery? I said oh that was just grand. We used to go to the station. Used to go to the depot as we used to call it, to see a train come in, you know. Just anything to be doing something, you know. Sunday afternoons.

DR. PATTERSON: What was life like before television and radio?

MRS. STITH: You know something? I don't know what we did without them to tell you the truth. Really and truly. Really, but we would find something. I think we read more.

DR. PATTERSON: At night time it was quieter. You have been a member of the Episcopal Church all these years. Is that right, Sis?

MRS. STITH: No, I was a member of the Presbyterian Church.

DR. PATTERSON: Presbyterian Church.

MRS. STITH: But I always liked the Episcopal Church an awful lot, and see most of my friends were Episcopalians. So I would go to church with them a lot too, but I liked the, because I remember Dr. Summerel. I don't know whether you remember him or not. Do you?

DR. PATTERSON: I remember him by name only.

MRS. STITH: Well he was a grand person really, and after I was married, I became confirmed in the Episcopal Church and we went religiously every Sunday right there.

DR. PATTERSON: Do you think the churches in general have meant a lot to this town of New Bern?

MRS. STITH: Oh, I'm sure. I'm sure they have, and now, my lands,

look how they have grown with so many people coming into New Bern. You're lucky to get a seat some times at the Episcopal Church, right? And most all churches, I imagine.

DR. PATTERSON: This is Fred Latham talking.

MR. LATHAM: Sis, do you remember the Slater family?

MRS. STITH: Yes.

MR. LATHAM: That lived there in the house I live in now.

MRS. STITH: Yes, I certainly do. And I remember the Speight family.

MR. LATHAM: The Speight family?

MRS. STITH: Sister used to go with Marshall, Marshall Speight.

MR. LATHAM: And did he have a sister?

MRS. STITH: Yes.

MR. LATHAM: A younger sister?

MRS. STITH: But she was of an age that I didn't know her. I think he had an older one and a younger one to tell you the truth. I just knew him, because he would come home to see her, you know, a lot, but I remember the family.

MR. LATHAM: Yes. I had an experience with one of the Speight girls who was, had been married and moved away, and then came back here about two years ago, and was looking for that house.

MRS. STITH: 'Cause she had never seen it.

MR. LATHAM: She had never seen it. Well, maybe she had seen it but she didn't remember exactly where it was. She had a picture of it and she thought it was down by the river because it had such

a high porch. And so she stopped in at the library and asked Emily Jane Miles if she knew where this house was. And she said right away she told where it was. Right down the street. And she made a copy of the picture and left it with Emily Jane and now I have it. It was a picture before the house was enlarged and immediately thereafter.

MRS. STITH: Have you got it with you?

MR. LATHAM: No, I don't have it with me. It was the only picture I have of "just before and after" of that house.

MRS. STITH: Well, now wasn't the porch still like what it is now?

MR. LATHAM: Yeah, the porch was high. Always high.

MRS. STITH: Well, what was it, Freddy, that was different.

MR. LATHAM: The difference there was it didn't have the bricks. It was not built up on the porch. You could, it was a high porch with no railing around it. No railing and if anybody fell off that it was known.

DR. PATTERSON: Originally there was no porch there at all.

MR. LATHAM: That's correct.

MRS. STITH: Was not?

DR. PATTERSON: No. When that was built by Thomas Jerkins there was no porch on that house.

MR. LATHAM: No porch there and it was, underneath the porch right now are the old columns that had been on there preceding the ones that are on it now, but there was an old door with the big hinges and everything and how it opened to...

MRS. STITH: Is that right? Well, I'd like to see that picture sometime, Freddy. I tell you this. You remember the house next door to Fred's, Mrs. Maude Munger when she was married lived there. You know Oscar Lane was her husband. And that house, now y'all, I know I'm telling the truth. I know that's what it was. It was low to the ground. That porch was low and when Miss Maude moved in there she had that lifted up like it is and filled in which makes it very pretty.

I love the entrance there, but that was a porch all the way across that house. That's when the Thornton's lived there.

DR. PATTERSON: Is that the same house that the Guion's had later, Tom Guion, Bessy?

MRS. STITH: Bess Guion lived there. Yeah, right there.

DR. PATTERSON: Sis, Paul Mengel and Martha lived in the...

MRS. STITH: Right next door to us on Middle St.

DR. PATTERSON: Munger house right next to you. What did Paul Mengel do?

MRS. STITH: He worked with the mill supply and his death was very sudden. It really was and a surprise to everybody.

DR. PATTERSON: He was in the mill supply with Mr. Lane and...

MRS. STITH: No, Mr. Lane was in the bank. He was in the, now what was the name of that bank that he was in. Bill Blades and, oh, like that, but I don't think Mr. Lane was ever in the

DR. PATTERSON: Robert Lane.

MRS. STITH: No. Oscar, Oscar Lane.

DR. PATTERSON: I was thinking of Robert.

MRS. STITH: Well, now Robert Lane I think was. Excuse me, darling. I thought you meant...

DR. PATTERSON: And my Uncle Albert was there too.

MRS. STITH: That's right. And I tell you somebody that was just most important, Hamilton. Hamilton's aunt. What was her name? Hamilton Stryon's aunt. Miss Lelia, Miss Lelia Stryon. She was one of 'em. I mean, you know, she worked there for years.

DR. PATTERSON: And she lived on ...

MRS. STITH: Hancock Street ...

DR. PATTERSON: Hancock Street in that double porch house.

MRS. STITH: And I understand somebody's bought that house, but it's really about to come to pieces. It's a shame that it's gotten in such a bad way.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, Sis, this has been fun talking to you. If you have no other stories to tell....

MRS. STITH: I can't think of another thing. Maybe when you all leave me I can think of something. You know what I mean.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, we do thank you for letting us come.

MRS. STITH: Well, I hope that helps you some.

DR. PATTERSON: It does help.

MRS. STITH: I don't know ...

DR. PATTERSON: It helps us see New Bern as it was when you grew up and it helps the story a lot.

MRS. STITH: And if I could just think of little other things, I'll let you know.

DR. PATTERSON: Alright. Well, I'm going to cut this off, Sis, and I thank you for letting us come and I thank you for Memories of New Bern Program.

MRS. STITH: Well, you all have been such grand company. Come back again. When you haven't got anything like this, we'll just ..

DR. PATTERSON: I'm going to cut this off.

END OF INTERVIEW