

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

ALFRED D. WARD

INTERVIEW 1024.3

This is Dr. Joseph Patterson representing the Memories of New Bern Committee. My number is 1000. I am interviewing Mr. Alfred D. Ward at his office at 409 Pollock Street in New Bern. The number of the interview is 1024.3. The date is December 22, 1992. This is a continuation of an interview begun earlier with Mr. Ward.

Dr. Patterson: Al, it's a pleasure to be back here again for our third interview. You have so much information about the city of New Bern that we could go on for a very long time, but we'll try to talk about some issues that are most important to the story of New Bern. The first one I would like to ask you to comment on is segregation, integration, civil rights, and the death of Martin Luther King. How did all of this affect the city of New Bern and how did the city respond to what happened?

Mr. Ward: Joe, there was really little effect on the city. Now let me explain that. Let me go back a little bit. When I was a child, of course the two communities were totally and completely segregated.

My recollection is one of warm affection between the two races. I'm sure there are blacks who would look at it differently from their point of view and I can understand that. In my earliest memory, I had a black nanny who stayed in a room in the house at what was then 408 Spencer Avenue. We always had someone who was a cook. Many years ago, even as late as 1949, 1950, after I moved out on Clark Avenue, there was a lot of contact between the races. There was a young woman who was then fifteen years old, Irene Chapman, who took care of our two children in the early 1950's. Her sister works for the city now.

A very nice person. She works in the Planning Department. I've kind of kept up with Irene through her, and she later married and has two children who are professionals in New England as I recall. We have a note in the scrapbook that she left when she decided that she needed to do something else and there were tears splashed on the note that she left for us. For example, one time she took our kids over to what I had then thought of as a nightclub over in the black section, leaving our house on Clark Avenue and going over across what eventually was Green Park apartments and into that area. And although I didn't particularly like the kids being taken over there at that age, it was no big deal. Going on up to the time of the first sit-ins at restaurants and so on, we had a little bit of that here. May have had more than I remember now, but I don't recall that it was any big thing. I remember some of the restaurants particularly, didn't want to integrate. John Moore who had a bar-be-que place out on Broad Street which bordered the black section, he was adamant about it. I remember hearing him say that primarily he was afraid of the effect that it would have on his white customers. I don't know that that was entirely true, knowing John, but that was what he said in any event. He was carried to court and eventually he closed his place of business there and opened a place out near where Weyerhauser paper mill is. Then later he sold that and relocated where he is now out on Neuse Blvd., in town now, it was out of town then. I heard a restaurant owner on Middle Street-as a matter of fact, he was then a member of the board-and he had some opposition to the integration. If you look at it from the standpoint

to which we all were accustomed by virtue of having grown up in the South, you can understand some of the concerns that they expressed.

Of course I'm not trying to justify their concerns, I'm just stating it as it was. I don't recall, was it 1967 or 1968 that Martin Luther King was assassinated?

Dr. Patterson: I'm not quite sure either. I think it was '68.

Mr. Ward: It was in the spring of one of them and it may well have been 1968, 'cause I remember I was down here at the office with my brother Kennedy working on a brief on a case that we had pending in the newly established North Carolina Court of Appeals, arising out of a head on collision between a Brinks armored truck and a Chevrolet convertible driven by Marvin Raines, Jr. I got a telephone call saying that Rev. Martin Luther King had been assassinated. There was some activity in New Bern as a result of that. Nowhere near like the riots which have taken place in other places, the riots that took place elsewhere at that time. The emotional reaction was very large but it didn't manifest itself in a lot of fires and so forth. I think we've been very fortunate in New Bern to have been able to go through the integration which has occurred over the years and not have more of that. I was looking earlier in anticipation of our talking about this, and I found that the ordinances which are now a part of the city code were adopted in May of 1968. Those are the ordinances that control demonstrations. For example; a state of emergency defined in section 8-16 of the code was a part of the ordinance that was adopted on April 5, 1968. The others, which are a part of the same division of the

same article of the code, were all a part of that same ordinance. Obviously it had to have been prompted by some events that occurred, and I'm satisfied that these sections of the code were prompted by the assassination of Dr. King.

Dr. Patterson: Al, let me interject here something that I was told by someone else. After Dr. King's assassination, the traffic coming across the bridge from Bridgeton was re-routed through town down Pollock Street in order to avoid the Five Points Frog Pond area. Do you recall that?

Mr. Ward: I don't recall that specifically but I'm not surprised. I could not have told you that that occurred.

Dr. Patterson: Was the police department representing the city involved in protection for the marches that occurred or to control outbursts in the city?

Mr. Ward: I have no independent recollection of that Joe. I would say that it was involved on both counts, to protect persons and property and also to protect the people who were marching. Given the climate of that time, I suspect that they were more in sympathy with the other citizens than they were with the marchers. As I recall, there were no blacks on the police department at that time.

Dr. Patterson: Do you recall any incidence of rioting in the schools during the civil rights period, during integration?

Mr. Ward: No, I don't recall any. I was reminded of something the other day. At the time the high school was integrated, there was a white principal. I don't recall his name. He was a small man in

stature. This came up in a conversation I had with my wife. She had been talking to Genevieve Dunn. Genevieve was on the school board, which was then the City School Board, and she reminded Muggins of some things that happened out at the high school that's now the Grover C. Fields school. It was then the relatively new high school. It was opened after World War II. There were some fights out there and Genevieve said that she, and I think Grace Hancock was then on the board, she and Grace and one or two others went out there to try to help settle the discontent that was being manifested and they found the principal in his office instead of out taking care of the problems, the rumblings that were occurring. It reminded me, I had been told that they found him under his desk, and he was replaced on the spot.

I say on the spot. I don't mean that moment, but he was replaced within a very short period of time. Grover Fields, who had been the principal at what had been a black school, was brought in as the principal of the high school and he didn't put up with that stuff a minute. He got it settled down and they didn't have any more problems.

Dr. Patterson: I gather from what you're saying, as city attorney, when you could overview all these things, that New Bern handled all of this in a fairly good way.

Mr. Ward: My perception was they did. We had some reasonable people with whom to deal. I would have known had there been any real violence of any large quantity, wide spread violence shall I say, and I don't recall that. I'm not saying to you that everybody stayed happy all the time because obviously they didn't. Speaking of that, let

me tell you of one instance that occurred. Rev. L. C. Nixon is still around. He has been active in the civil rights movement ever since there has been such. My perception of "Buckshot" as he is known, perhaps differs from some others, from some comments you made to me about one conversation you had, one interview. But I got a call, it was either 1963 or 1964 because it was while we were building the building in which we're talking now and our office was located around on Hancock Street in a house my father owned. Reginald Frazier, who was a young black lawyer, wanted to come down with Rev. Nixon to talk to me about something involving the civil rights protest. When they came in, during the course of the conversation, Mr. Nixon, Rev. Nixon, became rather agitated, as he can do very easily in a rather high pitched voice, shrill voice, which anyone who knows him would recognize. He told me the streets were gonna run red with blood. He left and I had some little conversation with Reginald Frazier and Reginald tried to reassure me that that was not gonna happen. I took it seriously. At that time Terry Sanford was governor of North Carolina. Terry was a friend of mine. I called him and he gave me a number at which I could reach him any time day or night in case we needed any assistance from the National Guard down here. I kept that number in my wallet for years during the rest of his term in office. In fact, it stayed in my wallet for a lot longer than that because I just didn't throw it away.

Dr. Patterson: But you never had to use it.

Mr. Ward: Never had to use it.

Dr. Patterson: Let's move on to something else. St. Luke's Hospital has played a major role in health care in New Bern. I think you have some comments to make about the closing of St. Luke's and the results of that.

Mr. Ward: Yeah. I don't remember it vividly, Joe, but I do recall that all of us were quite shocked when we heard that the Catholic order that had been operating here for many years was going to leave. I had my second child, my first son, Dec, A. D. Ward, Jr. was born there.

Nancy had been born while I was in the service. She was born down at the Navy hospital at Camp LeJeune. But Dec, and Sam, who is our third child, and Martha were all born there at the St. Luke's Hospital.

My wife and the children received very good care. They did a good job. So we were quite shocked when we found that they were gonna move.

As a result of that, there were a number of meetings of course by people associated with the city and the county and the medical society who were interested in trying to do something to take the place. Now it was not a matter of that they were going to close it and move the next day, but it was rather immediate. It may have been twelve months.

I'm not sure. But I recall attending a meeting of some civic leaders including one doctor I recall, Dr. Charlie Hall Ashford, the father of the Charlie Ashford that is now in New Bern. I think probably Dale Millns attended. I'm not sure of the exact time frame, but I know we had some discussion and were talking about what could be done with the building and what could be done to build another hospital to replace that. There was a lot of talk about where it should be located. A

matter of fact, my brother Kennedy suggested, and I think he was the first one to suggest that they should acquire the property on which the state prison farm was located which was then some distance outside of New Bern out on US70 where the hospital is in fact now located.

This was a rather stressful time, and of course the end result has been that we do have a very nice medical facility which is now known as the Craven Regional Medical Center. Of interest is the fact that we have some ongoing litigation with the Craven Regional Medical Center and Craven County, the county board of education, New Bern Craven County Board of Education and the Trustees of the Community College. They decided at one point some years ago that they didn't like the strenuous, rather rigid inspections that took place by the city inspection department. I could spend two or three days talking about that. We finally have a judgment in the Superior Court which says that the local acts under which they attempted to have this vested in the county are unconstitutional. It's now on appeal again to the appellate courts of North Carolina and we hope to have a favorable decision within the next sixty days.

Dr. Patterson: Al, do you remember that one of the reasons the Sisters closed this hospital was that they had a problem with the annex in the back of the hospital, that the floor had dropped several inches and they considered the building unsafe?

Mr. Ward: Now that you mention it, I do. I had forgotten that. The annex was the building which later was used by the welfare department.

Dr. Patterson: Well, I think the annex attached to the main building and it became one building.

Mr. Ward: Yeah, but the annex was a separate building and it housed the Sisters at one time, did it not?

Dr. Patterson: No, the Sisters had a home of their own back of there. The annex was put on during the early 1940's because of the war and the people coming in. The government helped finance that.

But then the floor dropped several inches as I understand it, Dale Millns told me this, and that they didn't think they could take a chance with that building any longer. They had had a terrible tragedy in another hospital up north.

Mr. Ward: That sounds vaguely familiar Joe. I think the annex was what was later used by the poverty program that was started here.

Dr. Patterson: I don't know.

Mr. Ward: Coastal Progress, the Craven Operation Progress of Poverty.

Dr. Patterson: You know a lot about the waterfront of New Bern on the Trent River side where the Sheraton Hotel now stands. You know about the development of that area and about urban renewal in general.

I wonder if you would speak to the Trent River waterfront and how it's changed.

Mr. Ward: I may have mentioned that Dale Millns, who's been a friend of mine ever since he came to New Bern, made the comment during the early years that he was associated with the city, and he served as an alderman for two terms of two years each and he served as a mayor

for two years, one term, some time during that period, and my recollection is that it was early on while he was on the board, the waterfront was being addressed and he made the comment that he'd like to see it cleaned up all the way around the city and the city acquire an interest in the waterfront. I thought he was an extremely idealistic person and he was talking about something that would never come to pass. It has. As you know, New Bern the city, was a seaport historically. I've heard stories that it was the largest seaport on the east coast between Philadelphia and Charleston at one time. When I was a child and a young adult, the waterfront still had a lot of traffic. Not so much freight coming in, but fishing boats. They had pilings on both sides of the Trent River; pilings on the perimeter of the Neuse River around the city; old pilings that were left from docks that had been torn up by hurricanes or otherwise had wasted.

There was an effort made by Cedric Boyd who at one time was Superintendent of Public Works. He named himself Director of Public Works to the chagrin of some of the board members. Cedric was one of these characters that most cities have. Cedric did a lot of good.

A lot of people criticized him, but he did a lot of good and the park at Union Point is named for him. He used some city equipment and pulled out a lot of the pilings that were an eye sore. Finally, back in the sixties and early seventies, the city became involved in urban renewal which was a program funded by the federal government. Initially, the Redevelopment Commission of the city undertook a program up on Bern Street. Some of the nicer homes that belonged to members of the black

community were in that area however, and they objected very strenuously and so the Redevelopment Commission backed off of it. The Redevelopment Commission was a corporation which was chartered as a result of a resolution adopted by the board of aldermen and sent to the Secretary of State. It was a statutory corporation. They decided, and I don't recall the exact dates, but they decided that they would undertake the renewal of the area on the Trent River from Hancock Street eastwardly to East Front Street bounded on the north by South Front Street, later Tryon Palace Drive, and it probably was then Tryon Palace Drive. There were several buildings which were left out of it, buildings located on Tryon Palace Drive, some in the first block, the western most block that were relatively new, the Harvey Mansion which is in the eastern most block, and the place where they had the water treatment facility east of that.

Dr. Patterson: Culligan.

Mr. Ward: Culligan. The commission acquired all of that property which consisted mainly of old warehouses, some stores on Pollock Street. There were some buildings that unfortunately could not be saved. I remember one or more brick townhouses, not unlike my mother's house, on the west side of Craven Street south of Tryon Palace Drive.

My recollection is that it had been converted to a store and it was demolished along with all the rest of the structures in that area except those that were specifically excluded. The commission acquired all that property and unfortunately at a time when the economy took a down turn, so there was no developer who was interested in acquiring it

for redevelopment which was the entire purpose of the program. So it sat for a long time. A part of it was acquired and utilized for C. H. Stith Agency on the corner, the southeast corner at the intersection of Craven and Tryon Palace Drive. Wachovia bought the site on which they're located on the southwest corner of Middle and Tryon Palace Drive. BB&T also bought the corner across Middle Street from Wachovia. There were a number of studies made. Some funded in part by the city, and some by the county and city, and I think one the Kellenberger Foundation participated in or the Tryon Palace Commission participated in to some degree. Everyone thought as a result of those studies that really what ought to go down there was a major hotel. There was also talk of a convention center, which did not materialize. Finally, there was a young man who came in here as a result of the most recent, no, let me go back a minute. In the meantime, the county had purchased part of the property, well, all of the property east of Craven Street, and they were considering putting a courthouse down there. They had been under a substantial amount of pressure to improve the facilities. We had entirely outgrown the courthouse. The county had acquired the old social security building on New Street and were using that as a district courthouse. The jail had outlived its usefulness by a great deal. So the county was going to put the courthouse down there on the waterfront. The Sun Journal in the meantime had been acquired by the group that owns it now.

Dr. Patterson: Freedom Press.

Mr. Ward: Freedom Press. They had an editorial policy which

was against the location of the courthouse. They made it appear that the county proposed to use the finest view in New Bern for the prisoners who would be located on the top floor of the court facility, and that killed it, as you can imagine. That was not the only thing, but that was one of the things that killed it. In part it was also due. In 1976 that area down there became known as Bicentennial Park in connection with the celebration of the bicentennial. Unfortunately, a lot of people had the idea that that had been acquired by the city as a park and should remain a park, should continue to be used as a park, and a lot of them still think so. But in any event, we had several developers come in who proposed to locate a hotel down there. One young fellow out of Washington, D.C. was here for a while with his people. He seemed to have a good grasp of what he was doing and he had had some prior experience in that, but his proposal didn't fly for some reason. He may not have ever made a specific proposal. Then we had a fellow come in here from North Carolina, the western part of the state, and his group was known as Trent Development Associates. He was a rather fast talker, silk suits, pointy toed shoes. He was a promoter, and what he proposed was to secure a franchise from one of the larger hotels, Sheraton or one equivalent to that. The key to his proposal was that there would be a UDAG grant.

Dr. Patterson: What is that?

Mr. Ward: Urban Development Action Grant which the government was then making to certain cities that qualified and New Bern was one of them. We qualified with the help of this promoter, and some

consultants that he employed in Washington. We did qualify for a UDAG grant in the sum of \$1,980,000. That has been the subject of a lot of confusion and is a subject of a law suit brought by Rev. Nixon and Mr. Frazier and two others. They just didn't understand it. The grant was made for the specific purpose of being made the subject of a loan to the developer of the hotel. The theory being that if the hotel were built, that it would provide employment to those who built it and it would provide permanent employment to citizens of this area, and it has done so. Unfortunately, it was under financed to begin with. I am told that there was some mismanagement of the money coming out of it. There were cost overruns before it was completed. It finally was completed and was opened.

Dr. Patterson: The Sheraton.

Mr. Ward: The Sheraton. Now it belongs to the second group, some of whom were associated with the first ones as limited partners.

It's gone through the hard times and an addition is being constructed now east of Craven Street which we were told early on was going to have to be done. In fact, I was told that the developer that developed it told the city, that the Sheraton urged them to make it 150 rooms rather than a 100 rooms in the initial construction because the amenities were so expensive. The rooms were costing much more than a 100 room hotel could support.

Dr. Patterson: Al, going back just a little bit. Prior to all of this influx by the Sheraton and other businesses, was not that area filled in on the waterfront?

Mr. Ward: Joe, as you can see by looking at the aerial photograph that I have framed here on the wall, that was a typical waterfront of a waterfront town. It had area slips dug back in it. There were docks all along there. The waterfront was like a jigsaw puzzle. As you can see, there were large areas there that did have to be filled in. I didn't represent the commission. The first executive director came by and talked to me and asked me if I would represent them. I had all I could do at the time representing my regular clients, including the city. They were proposing to pay some hourly sum which would not make it worth my while to represent them. And at that time I was practicing by myself and it would not have been practical because of all of the condemnation suits that had to be done after title work and so on. But talking about the waterfront and the filling. All of that required, of course, various government permits and it required among other things a quit claim deed from the state of North Carolina after the filling was done. At one point I received a telephone call asking me to participate in a conference that was taking place. Ward and Smith, and incidentally, the Ward of Ward and Smith is a different Ward family from mine. We're not any kin, at least in the last 250 years. They're good friends of mine but we are not related. Although there are two families of Ward lawyers that have practiced here since the nineties at least. But I received a telephone call and participated in a conversation in which the attorney for the commission was being told, or had been told, that they couldn't get title insurance down there. They wanted to buy the property which was located in the

southeast corner of the urban renewal area next to the Trent River bridge. They'd been told they couldn't get title insurance. Well, it turned out very quickly why. A substantial part of that area had been filled under permit from the Corps of Engineers. One of the conditions of the permit was that if the permittee did fill it under the permit, that the Corps could require that it be dug out at any time because it was a part of the navigable waters of the United States.

So in order to take care of that, after I did a little looking, I found out the only way we could take care of it was to get an Act of Congress passed which declared that that was no longer a part of the navigable waters of the United States, and so that's what we did.

Dr. Patterson: United States Congress.

Mr. Ward: Yeah. It took a while to get it done, but we got it done.

Dr. Patterson: Al, the new Comfort Inn suites that are going up on the Neuse River close to Union Point, the land that the Comfort Inn is using, is not part of all of this.

Mr. Ward: No it is not.

Dr. Patterson: That's privately owned.

Mr. Ward: Privately owned. It was acquired by Frank Efird or Frank Efird's company. Frank was the developer who developed River Bend and other things here in and around New Bern. He acquired that property and proposed to develop it but he never did. It was later sold to the man who is now developing it, whose name I do not know.

Dr. Patterson: Have there been efforts for a long time in New

Bern to develop the downtown area, to renew it?

Mr. Ward: Yes there have. Of course when you and I were growing up, the downtown was the business area except for the Five Points area which was in effect the black business area. Let's talk about that a little later. Of course we had several large stores. We had a lot of medium size stores. We had a lot of small stores. Belk's occupied a multi-story building downtown. Montgomery Ward had occupied another part, or an adjoining building, which Belk's acquired at one point after Montgomery Ward moved out on Neuse Blvd.

Dr. Patterson: Now that's on Middle Street.

Mr. Ward: On Middle Street. That's right at the intersection of Church Alley and Middle Street. J.C. Penney, when I was growing up, was located in the southern part of the McLellan's building which adjoins our office. McLellan's building is on the corner of Middle and Pollock Street, on the southwest corner. J.C. Penney occupied the southern half of that building back in the thirties. I can't tell you exactly when it first occupied it, but I know in the twenties the wooden homes that were located between our office and Middle Street were torn down and McLellan's was erected there. As a matter of interest, my father bought many of the timbers out of those houses when they were torn down and used them in the construction of a two and a half story brick home that he built at 410 Spencer Avenue in which we resided in the late thirties. Going on north on Middle Street, of course on the corner across Pollock from McLellan's was the Elk's Temple. It's still there. Charles Store was occupying a building

next to that and a part of the first floor, the ground floor, of the Elk's Temple. Charles Store was named for Charles Coplon. He was a Jewish gentleman who developed a large chain of stores.

Dr. Patterson: Coplon?

Mr. Ward: Coplon. He was related to the same family that had Coplon Smith which was a department store across from Belk's in the area now known as Bear Plaza. Their building burned some years ago.

Incidentally, I worked at Coplon Smith when I was a child, 15, 16 years old. As I recall, I was paid the sum of ten cents an hour. I worked all day Saturday. I learned how to wrap Christmas presents.

I was inside their square elevated area where they had the cash register, accepted all the purchases, and I wrapped Christmas presents down there for several Christmases I recall. It was a good department store. Down the street on the other side, and I'll come back to going up northwardly on Middle, was Sam Lipman and Sons Department Store.

The area in which it was located is now empty. The store burned some years ago. We've had some vacant land downtown within the last 10, 15 years for the first time ever. All of it had been occupied. But Mr. Lipman came here as a peddler with a pack on his back, I'm told.

He had a very large family. One of his sons was Harry Lipman who was quite active in civic affairs when I came back here and remained active for many years. He lived down the street from me out on Spencer Avenue. He later retired and moved to Florida I believe. I saw his adopted son, Morton Lipman, his stepson whom he adopted I think, within the last year or so. He lives now in Texas and he came in. He was

a good friend of my brother Kennedy. But they were a very prominent family in New Bern. On down next to Lipman's were several men's stores that belonged to the Howard family. That's another Jewish family.

Dr. Patterson: Now this is on the west side of Middle Street.

Mr. Ward: On the east side of Middle Street. There was a drug store on the corner, Duffy's Drug Store. Bryan Duffy owned it. Across the street, when I was a child, was an A&P store.

Dr. Patterson: That's on the southeast corner of Middle.

Mr. Ward: That's on the southeast corner of Middle, and then South Front Street. It was really on the corner of the Gaston Hotel which was operated by several different people back during the years I was younger. It was bought by Mr. Louis Howard and he restored it to some extent and opened it. It was the key to a number of conventions that were held here back in the fifties and sixties. Incidentally, it burned and the site was acquired by the Redevelopment Commission. Across the street from that was a multi-story office building, across Middle Street, which also was acquired by Mr. Louis Howard.

Dr. Patterson: Where was that located Al?

Mr. Ward: On the southwest corner where Wachovia is now. I don't recall the name of the building but it was a substantial building.

Dr. Patterson: A brick building several stories tall?

Mr. Ward: Yes, which included a number of offices. Going back northwardly on Middle Street, of course Kress's was adjoining Charles' Store. Then there were several different stores but all occupied by retail facilities going northwardly to Broad Street. Williams Cafe,

which is now Chelsea, was initially constructed, I'm told, by Caleb Bradham after Pepsi Cola became well known. He was a pharmacist, Mr. Bradham was. He moved from a small pharmacy where he developed Pepsi Cola on the southeast corner of Middle and Pollock Streets where Hearne's Jewelers is now to a very nice pharmacy which he built there on that corner, I understand.

Dr. Patterson: Now, is that what's called the Clark's building?

Mr. Ward: No. That's across Broad Street from the Clark's building.

Dr. Patterson: Williams?

Mr. Ward: Williams Cafe, now Chelsea, was Bradham's Drug Store.

I think the metal ceiling that's in there now is the same ceiling that he put in there then. I think the floor is the same floor. It's a tile floor. They have a large mural in there now addressing Pepsi Cola. Pepsi Cola is another story of what might have been. My grandfather represented Pepsi Cola company, represented Mr. Bradham.

He talked my great uncle, my grandmother's brother, Jeff Farrior, into investing the first \$10,000 in Pepsi Cola. As you know, Pepsi Cola went bankrupt after World War I because of some contracts that had been signed, sugar contracts that Mr. Bradham signed. It's family story, tradition, history, that he signed these contracts and sugar went sky high and it broke the company. But the Clark's building is across the street. I was trying to remember what it used to be called.

Sam Clark bought it about 1938, '39, '40. Sam was a rather flamboyant individual. I remember he rode motorcycles all the time. He was the

one that I mentioned during an earlier talk we had that supplied the police officers with handcuffs and I think perhaps some pistols when the city did not supply them. But he opened a drug store there. There had been one there earlier. He opened one there. It was a teenager's hangout at the time he bought it.

Dr. Patterson: That had been Davis Drug Store.

Mr. Ward: Yep. Sam Clark ran the teens off. He didn't want them there. I don't meant that he kept them out completely, but he didn't let them hang out there as we had done prior to his acquisition of the property. I remember when he first came there he had a lot of empty boxes that he had up on the shelves when he didn't have the money to stock it properly. But he was there for a long time. He had a variety of interests. He got in the bond business with Charlie Abernethy, and I think that helped break him. Then of course north of that was a residence which is now the parking lot between the Clark building and the post office which was opened in the early thirties, which is no longer a post office. That's become the federal court building entirely. The post office has recently moved out of it and moved into what's now called O Marks, the old Belk building.

Dr. Patterson: Do you remember whose home that was next to the Clark building going north?

Mr. Ward: It seems to me that the Lawrence family rented all or part of it. There was a David Lawrence there. I don't remember.

Across the street of course from the post office is the Methodist Church, and then coming back south on the east side of Middle Street

is a residence which is now occupied by a dentist office. In that area was the library when I was a child. It was in a two-story building that was located there that was later purchased by the Christian Scientists I believe. Their reading room was located there as well as in a building south of it. There was a filling station on the northeast corner of Broad and Middle Street, just as there were filling stations on almost every corner in the city at one time. Of course the change from full service to self service has taken care of many of those. Across the street from that, across Broad Street, still on the east side of Middle, were a group of wooden stores. When I was a teenager, the corner was occupied by what was called the Green Door Tea Room. It was operated by a couple of ladies who were friends of my mother. They served very good food. As the name implies, it was not very heavy eating, but they had a good clientele.

Dr. Patterson: Mrs. Waldrop was one of the ladies.

Mr. Ward: Mrs. Waldrop, that's right. I say there were two of them. I think she owned it, but my impression is that her sister or cousin helped her there.

Dr. Patterson: Mrs. Williams, was it Amy Williams?

Mr. Ward: It could have been. There were several retail outlets along there that were built almost in a cluster. There was a shoe repair.

Dr. Patterson: Caprio's.

Mr. Ward: Caprio's Shoe Shop. He moved later into the building that was occupied by Joe Anderson's Drug Store on the southwest corner

of Fleet and Broad Streets. Joe Hatem is still there. The drug store has been closed now for some time. That incidentally, was another Duffy's drug store prior to Joe Anderson owning it. It belonged to my uncle, Charles Duffy's father, who was also a doctor, Leinster Duffy, and his wife, Bertha Duffy. He had some things that he put together, some over the counter medications that he sold through that. Incidentally, Uncle Leinster and Aunt Bertha, are responsible for mom and dad meeting each other. When my mother graduated from Woman's College in Greensboro, by whatever name it was then called, she came down here to go to work for Wooten Moulton. She was a Wooten Moulton and I think the Wooten of Wooten Moulton was kin, not close. She came down here to go to work for the studio and was staying with Uncle Leinster and Aunt Bertha at their home on the south side of Pollock Street between Hancock and then George Street. My father saw her walk by his home, which is now the Aerie, and made the comment, "I'm going to marry her." But anyway, going back to Middle Street, the Oxley's had a baby shop there. As I recall, it was right next to Caprio. Then there were several other small stores in there including Baxter's Sporting Goods, and I'm not sure what else. Miss Minnie Oxley and her sister, Georgia, operated that clothing store for many years. Miss Minnie was the survivor of the two. Miss Minnie didn't drive.

In 1940, shortly before I became sixteen years old, we became aware, my brothers and I, primarily my next younger brother William, became aware of the fact that she had a convertible sedan parked in her garage.

It was up on blocks. So we talked to her about buying it and she

was willing to sell it. It had been put up on blocks when her sister had become ill or died. Miss Minnie never did drive. She offered to sell it to us but she wanted too much money for it. She wanted \$25. We thought that was entirely too much money to pay for an automobile. The car had very few miles on it. It had the original tires on it. As a matter of fact my brother bought it the next year, or may have been in early '42. He had become sixteen in November 1941, and he bought it for twelve dollars and a half.

Dr. Patterson: Where did Miss Minnie live?

Mr. Ward: Miss Minnie lived on the south side of Rhem Avenue, and across the street from her were some lots which have not been developed. I can't tell you the exact block, but I believe it was the 400 block corresponding to the 400 block where we lived. No, no, it was the next block. No, I think it was the 400 block. It was across the area in which Ellis Zaytoun lived. He lived on the north side of Rhem Avenue down a little.

Dr. Patterson: Al, that's a good description of downtown as it was when you grew up and when I grew up. Let's move on to something else. In your role as city attorney you were in a position to make observations about development of recreation centers in New Bern. Would you speak to that?

Mr. Ward: Yes. Joe, we had two recreation centers when I first knew that there was such a thing. That is, after I came back here and my children had grown to the point where they were using the facilities. One was the George Street recreation center which had

been built during the Depression using material, as I understand it, that they secured from the area of the great fire in 1922. Bricks too. I believe I heard that in the program that you and the others put on.

Dr. Patterson: Bricks from the chimneys.

Mr. Ward: Bricks from the chimneys. That was done with WPA money. It was a reasonably nice facility. It had a small basketball court and it had some offices at one end. At the north end of the large room, which was a basketball court, they had a stage that the junior Chamber of Commerce used for some of its productions back in the early fifties when I was active in that organization. There was a black recreation center, in effect around the corner from it, Cedar Street Recreation Center.

Dr. Patterson: So this recreation center was primarily for whites.

Mr. Ward: That's correct. And of course at that time it was almost entirely segregated. There were some black kids that would come in playing. I doubt that there were any whites who were using the Cedar Street facility. There were also some tennis courts there south of the main building. There was a ball field away from George Street on the west side of the building which was used. I remember playing soft ball there when I was a relatively young man and a member the Jaycees. In the late sixties early seventies, funds became available which the city elected to use to build two recreation centers.

There had been no plans made as to which was to be built first, but

they decided to go ahead and build two. A center which was primarily for the use of our black citizens in the area known as D. E. Henderson Park off Chapman Street north of Broad Street. D. E. Henderson Park was an area which had been subdivided by Zeke Henderson many years ago. A lot of the lots had not been sold.

Dr. Patterson: Who was Mr. Henderson?

Mr. Ward: Mr. Henderson was a lawyer here back in the early twenties. He later moved to Charlotte.

Dr. Patterson: A black lawyer.

Mr. Ward: No, he was white. He was kin to the Barker's. I think Mrs. Barker, Charlie Barker's mother. Charlie and Chris' mother was his sister. He bought that area and subdivided it. He did not sell all of the lots. The area was rather low. Eventually, he donated that area to the city in exchange for which the city named it D. E. Henderson Park. The city also acquired some property out in the western part of the city, off Pine Tree Drive I believe. That was conveyed to the city by Mrs. Seth Parrott and her family for a reasonably low price in exchange for the city's putting a road in there so that she'd have access to the road. As I recall, that was what was done. The city started to erect two centers. There was some suggestion on the part of the black community that the so called

"white center" was going to be erected first. That was not the case.

Well, I can't tell you whether they had actually decided which was going to be built when, but in fact, they built the two of them at about the same time and opened them at about the same time. That was

one of the first situations that I recall that prompted something of a dispute between the races. There was a lot of correspondence back and forth. I believe Charlie Kimbrell was the mayor then. I remember some of the rather blistering letters he wrote responding to some of the charges that were being made. Letters were being written to Washington, from which we were getting the money, complaining about how it was to be spent and so on. But we lived through it. The centers have really been a great thing. The George Street center later was turned over to the tri-county women's organization and they've used it for senior citizens. Thelma Chadwick has served as leader of that organization during all these years. I think part of the senior citizens are still fed out there. The Cedar Street center was leased to a black fraternity some years ago for a nominal sum in exchange for which they were to enhance the building. There were certain renovations that were to be made and they have been made I understand. But that's the way the two old centers are being used now.

Dr. Patterson: The West New Bern Recreation Center has remained extremely active, has it not, as a recreation center?

Mr. Ward: It has, yes. And I think the other one has. I'm not aware that it has not. The city spent a lot of money on both of them.

Dr. Patterson: Al, this isn't specifically about New Bern but this certainly has affected New Bern and the life of New Bern, would you comment about the city of Havelock and how it has changed New Bern?

Mr. Ward: As you know, Havelock was nothing more than a ninety degree turn in US70. Trader's Store was there. It was right at the

railroad running between New Bern and Morehead City. In the fall of 1941, the government started acquiring property down there. When I came back here from the service prep school in Washington, as I mentioned the other day, in April of 1942, things were well under way down at Cherry Point. It became Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station.

After World War II, there was some substantial development down there by reason of the fact the Air Station had become a very large facility.

I decided in 1949, shortly after I came back here in the fall of '48, to open an office down there. There was no lawyer there. There were a number of businesses that had opened. Bob Rose had erected a nice building, had Robert L. Rose Motor Company. He had the Ford dealership.

And there were certain others. There were a few shopping center type developments. Joe Rachide was in one. I don't recall the name of it, but he had his men's store in one of them. So I decided that I'd go down there. I started out, I rented a small concrete block building down there and hired a young lady as a secretary. I started out going down there three days a week, parts of each of three days, and soon found that I couldn't continue to do it. During the period I was down there, I made a lot of friends, clients, and they were all interested in incorporating Havelock. For some reason that didn't work initially, probably the opposition of the military or people who were in the military who resided in the area that would have been incorporated because they were the ones who later fought the incorporation of Havelock. I finally, at the request of these clients, formed a water and sewer district or sanitary district, I'm not sure now which, for

the purpose of being able to provide amenities to the area which would have been provided by a municipal corporation had there been one. At about the time that we were going to activate that, Sam Whitehurst introduced a bill by which the area was incorporated subject to a referendum. By then, Havelock had grown a great deal. A lot of homes had been erected. The Godwin subdivision was substantially complete.

It had become a rather large community. The referendum was successful. The incorporation was complete. People were named as mayor and commissioners. Charlie Abernathy was hired by a group of dissidents down there to bring suit to keep it from being incorporated on the theory that there were a lot of people down there who should have been entitled to vote in the referendum, they had not been permitted to vote, and had they been permitted to vote, that the result of the referendum would be just the reverse. That was the case of Starbuck vs. The Town of Havelock. We tried the case out and kept them incorporated. Charlie appealed. I'm sure you remember Charlie.

Dr. Patterson: Yes.

Mr. Ward: I don't know how well you knew him, but he was a fellow that once he got into something he'd stick with it just like a dog gnawing a bone. I'm not talking about him personally, but that was his nature as far as practicing law was concerned. He appealed the case to the Supreme Court. We did not then have the Court of Appeals which was established in 1968. While it was on appeal, we got Sam to introduce another bill ratifying the incorporation which made the law suit a moot case. The opinion of the Supreme Court came out.

In fact, it affirmed the decision of the Superior Court but it also said, "In any event, the question is now moot because a bill has now been passed by the general assembly which ratifies the incorporation."

Of course the community has grown and grown and grown and grown and with the addition of the base within the incorporated limits, it's as large or large than the City of New Bern now. They offered me the job of City Attorney down there. Of course I was still City Attorney of New Bern, and I declined the honor. They then offered it to my brother Kennedy who had come back into practice and he was City Attorney a number of years down there.

Dr. Patterson: This facility at Cherry Point has drawn a lot of New Bern people down there for employment over the years hasn't it?

Mr. Ward: It's been the largest employer in this area ever since it's been there. They have what was known as the Naval Air Rework Facility, NARF. That's not the name of it now. It's an extremely large employer and they pay good wages and it has served as really a great impetus to the growth and economic well being of this area.

Dr. Patterson: Have the relationships between the city of New Bern and the city of Havelock been pretty good?

Mr. Ward: Most of the time. There have been a few disagreements, but I couldn't even cite one now. They have cooperated. The most recent one is on this Enhanced 911 situation where the county had one idea and the city had another and Havelock had another, but we worked it out and it's now in effect.

Dr. Patterson: You mentioned Joe Rachide who was a friend of yours and a friend of mine. He and I grew up together. It's sad to note at this point that his clothing store burned to the ground just a few months ago. Well, Al before we get you completely talked out, let me change direction and ask if you will get away from the city attorney position, which we may return to if we have time, but get away from that position and just talk about being a boy in New Bern and growing up in New Bern and what it was like out in Ghent to grow up out there, what Ghent was like, and the kind of things that you remember about your young life in New Bern.

Mr. Ward: Some of it we've already covered. Back in those days, and I'm talking about the thirties really, because in 1930 I became six years old, there was not, I started to say there was not a whole lot for a kid growing up to do, but there was. The old pavilion was within a stone's throw.

Dr. Patterson: That's the Ghent Casino?

Mr. Ward: Ghent Casino. Was within a stone's throw, a block and a half from where I lived. Behind that, south of that and really everything on the other side of the railroad track which was between Park Avenue and the area where the Ghent Casino was, was in woods. We had a lot of fun playing out there in the woods. We played in the Ghent Casino regularly. It was never closed up. They had dances over there almost every weekend, and frequently we'd go over the next day and partake of the soft drinks that had been left there.

Dr. Patterson: What was the building like?

Mr. Ward: It was a large wooden structure, elevated, dressing rooms underneath it. I don't recall that it was anything other than just a large room on the second floor. Wooden floor. We skated in there and used a mashed up tin can as a hockey puck and we had some good games over there.

Dr. Patterson: Was that a city building?

Mr. Ward: No. It was a part of the Ghent Land Company. Ghent bought the subdivision known as Ghent from the original owners. The Ghent Land Company was largely Mr. McCarthy, and I'm not sure now, the Sitterding heirs were a part of it. They still owned some property in this area. They owned the property on which the Ghent Casino was located.

Dr. Patterson: Who is this?

Mr. Ward: The Sitterding heirs. I just never have gotten into the relationship between the McCarthy's and the Sitterding's. But they ended up owning the Ghent Land Company. They had quite a complex over there south of the railroad where the casino was. The old baseball diamond was no longer there at the time I was first aware of it. The concrete dugouts were there. My recollection is that that was where the high school played baseball and played football too back in the twenties. I think that was where Hap Barden who was high school football coach in 1922, I think that was the home field for the high school teams. I remember as a small child that there was no place that we could swim. I know my mother used to carry us over to a friend's house on the Neuse river across the Trent river out several miles. That

would have been in the Neuse Forest area now. We'd go swimming there in the Neuse river. In later years I was a member of Troop 50 of the Boy Scouts, which had started out as the Hand gang. Dr. Hand, Billy's father, owned property right at the foot of the Neuse River bridge at the foot of Johnson Street. Billy Hand's house, a multi-story, or three-story brick townhouse, is on the corner now. They did not live there at that time. Dr. Hand lived on the corner of Johnson and Craven Streets. But Dr. Hand was very interested in the boys. He started it of course because of his son Billy. Billy is several years older than I. He may be about your age.

Dr. Patterson: A little younger.

Mr. Ward: Dr. Hand started the Hand gang and built a small structure down there on pilings, built a dock, built a slide. It became a Boy Scout troop but it kept a lot of the attributes of just a clubhouse. He had a little initiation that he went through, put all the boys through, using a transformer and some nails and a wooden chair. One of the things I remember particularly, he would sit an initiate down in that chair and put a table in front of him, small card table, and put some document type material on it in front of him. All the kids were gather around, "Sign! Sign! Sign! Sign!" You were given a pencil and if you started to sign that thing without reading it, he'd pop you with that transformer and you'd come up off that chair. But we swam down there, oh really until, I was probably sixteen when, I eased out. I got so I could drive a car and that provided the vehicle by which I could date. It gave me some wheels and so I was no longer

interested in Boy Scouts. I got as far as Life Scout.

Dr. Patterson: Was the swimming at Dr. Hand's gang pretty clean water?

Mr. Ward: (laughter) No. We used to kid we did the breast stroke pushing out. No. Of course the sewers all emptied into the two rivers, so it was anything but clean.

Dr. Patterson: But that didn't stop the swimming.

Mr. Ward: It didn't stop the swimming. No. We didn't even hesitate about it.

Dr. Patterson: You mentioned Camp Kiro in an earlier conversation. Did you go to Camp Kiro as part of Troop 50?

Mr. Ward: No, I went to Camp Kiro just as an individual. I think I was down there a couple of years. It was a camp down on Neuse River, on the generally southwest side of Neuse River. It consisted of half a dozen little wooden buildings. They had been constructed and the camp was operated by the two civic clubs, the Kiwanis Club and the Rotary Club here in New Bern.

Dr. Patterson: That's where the name came from.

Mr. Ward: That's the name, Kiro. There was not a whole lot to entertain boys down there, but we thoroughly enjoyed it. I learned to swim down there. I first met Ben Hurst. He was a counsellor down there. But I attended it a couple of years. That was the only time I really enjoyed camp. I got sent to a camp in Raleigh when I was a little bit older and it was owned and operated by my mother's great uncle by marriage. It was a real classy facility, including the golf

course. He lost his hat and rear end with that thing in the early thirties. But there was nothing like Camp Kiro.

Dr. Patterson: Al, I've been told, and I didn't know this, that the buildings at Camp Kiro were remnants of the CCC Camp that had been built in that area during the Depression. Do you recall that?

Mr. Ward: No I don't, but in retrospect, that's highly likely. They were small square buildings with screens over openings on each side, wooden closures that were propped up, they were hinged and then propped up, and my recollection is that the window on each side occupied most of the side above hip level standing inside. I suspect that it was correct.

Dr. Patterson: Now this is a place where mostly New Bern boys went?

Mr. Ward: That's what I recall. New Bern or from this immediate area. Of course the river is quite wide there. It was relatively shallow for some distance out. As I recall, we didn't have any boats, we didn't have any dock. It was really a minimum, but we thoroughly enjoyed it. We had camp fires at night. We had cook outs. I seem to remember that we had one larger building which served as a mess hall, and I think that was my first experience with what you call apple butter. I'm not sure that I've had any of it since then. (laughter)

Dr. Patterson: Well, you had just reached a point where you had gotten wheels and you could maneuver around in a car. Did that change your life?

Mr. Ward: Somewhat. It certainly helped as far as girls were

concerned. At that time my father had a 1939 Chevrolet four door automobile and he let me drive that. My mother initially had, when I became sixteen, she had a 1935 Air Flow Chrysler and I drove that some. As a matter of fact, I drove it occasionally to school if she were not going to be using it. But we didn't have kids with automobiles drive to school as we do now. I remember there was one boy in school, and he was a year older than I, C. W. Hodges, Jr., "Teensy" Hodges. Teensy's mother had a Lincoln automobile which she gave him, or gave him unlimited use of, and that was the only kid in high school that had a car that I recall. Now as I said, occasionally, my mother would let me drive her car to school. Maybe I ought to put this on a restricted list. I didn't drive recklessly, but I didn't drive slowly either. I was reading an article in the Reader's Digest last night that I'm gonna copy for all my grandchildren about the results of carelessness driving.

Dr. Patterson: Well, I'll just pass along a story that Fred Latham told me. His folks gave him a car when he was a young man, and it was a very powerful car, and he drove from New Bern to Kinston in that car in 21 minutes on the old road 120 miles an hour.

Mr. Ward: Well, I'll have to confess that driving a 1941 Ford Coupe that my Aunt Mary had, I drove from Morehead City back to New Bern in the middle of the night in about 24 minutes.

Dr. Patterson: I'm surprised you're still around.

Mr. Ward: Yep. That's what scares me about my grandchildren. Sandy Hoff was with me that night.

Dr. Patterson: Did you have lots of dances in your crowd when you were growing up?

Mr. Ward: We had right many. Most of them were held down at the Woman's Club at Union Point. In fact, that was the center of social activity, for our group at least, and for some ahead of us and some behind us. That is, in the late thirties, early forties. I can't speak beyond '41 because that was when I graduated from high school.

But that was the facility and that was the area where most of us parked as well, on that loop road, dirt road, that ran around the old Woman's Club.

Dr. Patterson: Looking down the river.

Mr. Ward: Looking down the river. Only we weren't looking down the river. (laughter)

Dr. Patterson: (laughter) Okay. I was there too. Your younger years in New Bern were pretty happy years were they?

Mr. Ward: They were. They were very happy. I enjoyed our crowd in school. Occasionally we had house parties down at Morehead over at the beach. But we didn't have a whole lot of that early on. There was not the activity centered on the ocean that there is now. That's been changed completely. As you know, Muggins and I have a boat that we use a great deal, spend a great deal of time on. I can remember dad bought a thirty foot boat in the early thirties. It was in bad shape. It was a wooden boat of course. It was what I called a raised deck cruiser. I don't know that it qualified for that dignified a name. It was rebuilt with some help from Barbour Boat Works and we

installed a four cylinder automobile engine, an old Star engine in it. It was something that we used constantly and it was one of the first pleasure boats on the river. Now this was just a thirty foot boat. It had a little cockpit aft. It had super structure in the center on which there was a bunk on each side and just ahead of that was this little engine, or really it was in that area. During the mid to late thirties, we used to leave New Bern every Saturday afternoon late. I don't know how my mother put up with it. At that time the lawyers kept their offices open until late afternoon on Saturday. Dad had rented a little boathouse down at the foot of Eden Street on Trent River and kept the little boat there. We'd leave about dark on Saturday and go down the river to Minnesott Beach. My two brothers would go to sleep and I'd run the boat under dad's supervision. We'd go down and stay until the next afternoon and come back up the river.

Did a little fishing and a lot of swimming and met a lot of nice people.

I remember one time somebody came by with a boat and rocked us. We were tied about to the dock down there, which was out right far because it was very shallow water there in front of Minnesott. As Dad stepped to the dock the boat rolled and he went overboard. Dad dressed about like my brother William does now. William thinks he's being real informal if he takes his tie off, and that was about the way my father was. He was very conservative. I think he probably had his straw hat on when he went overboard. (laughter) He was a devoted father and he spent a lot of time with us.

Dr. Patterson: I remember your father with great affection.

He later acquired another boat that I remember was called the "Decoy."

Mr. Ward: That's correct. He bought that boat in 1945 while I was overseas during World War II. The Decoy was a fifty foot wooden boat that was built in Meadows Marine Railway on the Trent River, is my understanding.

Dr. Patterson: In New Bern.

Mr. Ward: In New Bern, for Bill Blades. It was for a member of the Blades' family. I think it was for Bill Blades. It was built in the early twenties. It was characterized as a millionaire's boat, and I'm sure the dollars it cost then qualified it to be so characterized. It was a fine boat. When Dad bought it, the superstructure and most of the main deck had burned. That boat, I understand Mr. Blades had gone through bankruptcy, and the boat was bought by some physician who kept it up in the Great Lakes, and then during World War II it was brought back down into this area. How it got here, I don't know, but it was a part of the Navy auxiliary fleet and somewhere between here and Norfolk it caught fire and most of the superstructure and the main deck burned. So really it was just the hull and it had this enormous Stearn's marine gasoline engine in it which was not hurt. We restored that thing. I participated to some degree, my brother Kennedy more than I. We finally got it operational about 1951. Dad's pleasure was in working on it. I don't think he ever took it out by himself really, but he always enjoyed working on it. In that respect, he's very much like my brother William. William has several boats on which he's constantly working and he seldom rides.

But Dad made it available to us, and Muggins and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I remember we took one rather lengthy cruise. We went to Little Washington for Tar Heels Afloat.

Dr. Patterson: I was with you.

Mr. Ward: And you were with us. That's right. We were going down the Neuse River late one afternoon and I was using charts that Dad had taken off the old thirty foot boat from before the war, and the lights down in the vicinity of Bay River set up differently from the way they were on the chart, so I went to the next set of lights and ended up in I think it was Jones Bay and we dropped anchor and we found out next morning exactly where we were. But we had a good time.

Dr. Patterson: Do you remember the fellow coming up in his boat with one oar?

Mr. Ward: He had a pole.

Dr. Patterson: He was poling his boat.

Mr. Ward: And he allowed as he wouldn't go anywhere without his pole.

Dr. Patterson: "I carry my pole with me wherever I go." You stationed Alice and myself up in the bow of the boat looking for any trouble that might arise. I remember that trip. I remember the Decoy.

Mr. Ward: And you know, Joe, we put a new diesel engine in it in 1958. It was one that Dad had bought surplus in New York City.

I'm satisfied that it was a brand new engine and yet he paid just a few hundred dollars for it. It was war surplus. When I sold my

interest in the boat to Kennedy in 1975, we'd only put 140 hours on that engine.

Dr. Patterson: What happened to the Decoy?

Mr. Ward: Dad gave it to William and Kennedy and me. It had not been used in some time. I had built out on the river in 1955.

The age and stage of the kids and my law practice, we just didn't use the boat much. We used it as a sanctuary, just going over there to get away from the kids occasionally and go over to the Yacht Club.

But dad gave it to the three of us and William decided it was a little expensive for him. We had to have some work done on it, so he gave his interest to Kennedy and me. Then in 1975, after I became interested in getting another boat, I conveyed my interest to Ken. He later spent a lot of money on it and sold it to a man who's in the dry wall business over in Greenville. Last I heard, he still had the boat and keeps it at the Washington Yacht and Country Club.

Dr. Patterson: Now your sanctuary is another boat that you keep down there at Morehead.

Mr. Ward: Spooner's Creek.

Dr. Patterson: And you and Muggins go there every weekend and that's great. Al, like all older New Bernians, you've lived through hurricanes in this town. What are your memories about hurricanes in New Bern?

Mr. Ward: The first one I remember is the 1933 storm. We were then living in the bungalow on Spencer Avenue. As I recall, William and I were sleeping in the back room of the house which we called the

sun room. It had windows all around three sides of it. I recall waking up in the middle of the night and it was blowing pretty bad. The next day we found out that the Neuse River bridge had been taken out, the old wooden bridge. I don't recall a great deal about that. My next recollection really, jumps ahead to the early fifties. We had several storms that prompted going out to the yacht club to look after the Decoy ostensibly. My wife said that I managed to keep her pregnant and made her go down to my mother's house on Craven Street while we went out for a hurricane party. That's not exactly true. The one didn't have anything to do with the other. It just happened that almost every time we had a storm, she in fact was pregnant and I did in fact take her down to my mother's house with the kids. We didn't have the hurricane party that she envisioned, but we would have a drink or so on one of the boats. I remember 1954 had a hurricane come through, Hazel. It was only one of two that have passed west of the city. It created lots of problems upstate from here but not bad here. I had talked a friend of mine, Ralph Morris, into bringing his twenty-eight foot Correct craft up to the yacht club rather than taking it way up Trent River or up Brice's Creek as he had done on several other occasions. He put it outboard of the covered slips which are on the down river side of the yacht club property. We were in Scrappy Bell's boat which was in the first inside slip, Ralph's boat took quite a beating because the eye of the hurricane passed west of us so that created a different wind pattern from what we had become accustomed to when they passed east of the city. In 1955 I started building a

house out at Trent Shores, on July 4th. When I got my plans, it looked like the floor was rather high, so I talked to Albert Bell, Scrappy Bell, a local engineer and asked him what was the highest water we'd ever had here from a hurricane. He said that it was the 1933 storm which was 7 feet 8 inches. So I dropped the floor in my house a foot.

During the time it was under construction from July 4th to November 18th when we moved in, we had three hurricanes all of which exceeded 7 feet 8 inches. The first one, Connie, was 8 feet 6 inches. The second was Diane and that was 8 feet. The first one was at the top of the vents in the perimeter of the house. The second one was at the bottom of the vents, and the third one put ten inches of water on the subfloor in my house. That was Ione. That was the one that turned in and just churned between here and Morehead City for about 24 hours. We had 22 inches of rain in a little over 24 hours. And with them coming one right after the other, there was no place for the water to go, and as a result, we had the highest water that I've ever seen here. It created a real problem for the perimeter of the city, primarily down the foot of Johnson Street, some houses on East Front Street that were not built up as much as your grandfather's house was. They took people out of some of the tenant houses behind Billy Hand's house, which belonged to Dr. Hand, his father, took them out in boats. As a matter of fact, we were taken out of my house on Clark Avenue in a small boat. The only reason that that was necessary however, was because my wife was expecting, and our youngest child was born on December 1st. She was rather large and rather than have her walk

through the water, a boat came to my house and picked us up and carried us on up Clark Avenue to where I had parked my car.

Dr. Patterson: It might have been Hubert Jones running that boat.

Mr. Ward: It might have been.

Dr. Patterson: I talked to Hubert and he talked about going down and picking up people.

Mr. Ward: Hubert Jones said that it was the rain water that created the problem not Ione. It was, but it was the rain water on top of the wind driven water which we have anytime we have a northeaster.

Of course a northeaster drives the water from Pamlico Sound, which is northeast-southwest, and then up the Neuse River. We don't have any lunar tide here. The only thing we have is wind driven tide. And of course that 22 inches of rain that I referred to a moment ago came down on top of that hurricane tide, and you're right, it had no place to go. We went out to my house, the house that was under construction. I didn't know what I was going to find. I waded in water from the Country Club Road all the way around to where my house was being constructed, right across from where you had built your home, and had Dec on my shoulders. When I got to the house I found that we had very little damage. We had a couple of windows on the east end of the house that had been broken out. Some painting bucks had been blown down and hit some of those panes on generally the east side of the house, the kitchen and den. A very large tree which had been pushed out of the house site by a bulldozer had floated over and had knocked out the temporary door that was there in the kitchen end of

the house, and a few things had floated away, but we had no real problems.

Dr. Patterson: I think it's interesting to note that at that time there were only two houses in the Trent Shores development, yours and ours which was back of you up on a hill. One of the highest spots in Craven County. We had a basement and we stayed dry. Al, you mentioned a while ago something about the Five Points black business area. We're really interested in black businesses in New Bern. We're trying to get as much as we can about this. Would you speak to your memories of that area?

Mr. Ward: Joe, the area from Kilmarnock Street westwardly on Neuse Blvd., and Broad Street really became Neuse Blvd. there; I think some of the later maps reflect Broad Street going on out to End Street, or First Street, now, and then converting to Neuse Blvd., but there was one store after another, small stores, with a wooden shelf roof built out over the sidewalk. On Saturday night that was the place for our black friends to go. That was their party area. Of course during the day on Saturday, the downtown area was the main shopping district for the city and it was teeming with blacks and whites, farmers. Of course agriculture was the main basis for the economy in this area before World War II and on Saturday all the farmers came to town. A lot of people from Pamlico County, because this was the shopping center for Pamlico as well as for Craven County. But Five Points was the black business district, or the colored business district as we then called it. I remember there was one place along

there which more recently has been a service station, Phillip 66 station, between the corner of that street-I believe it's Kilmarnock Street-and the building that was the movie theater. There was a blacksmith that had his shop in a small wooden building there. It was property that my mother had bought and he rented from her for many, many years. The man's name was Henderson. I hadn't thought about that in a long time. But there were all kinds of businesses. They had retail businesses. They had places at which you could be served food. Robbie's place of course was not there. That's in more recent years, Robbie's Rib House. But it was an area which just teemed with activity, particularly on Saturday nights.

Dr. Patterson: Did the black businesses extend all the way down Queen Street to Frog Pond?

Mr. Ward: Yes, there were a number of them there. That was not so much a business section as residential as I recall though. The Frog Pond area, which is, of course, the corner of Bern Street and Queen Street, was another active area. But again, that was mostly residential. The real business area was from the intersection of Queen and Broad westwardly the next two or three blocks. Forbes Alley, now Avenue, and the name of the other one escapes me (Sutton Alley), but there were two alleys that ran through from Broad Street, Neuse Blvd., to McCarthy Square. That was another interesting area. Mr. C. J. McCarthy operated a business that had been founded by his father I understand, who was Thomas McCarthy. It was T something. He had a very large two-story house that was located between Pollock and Queen

Streets on the east side of the intersection. That area is not now occupied by anything. His store was off of I think it's Bryan Street, Bryan or Norwood, where the electrical supply place is now. He had an enormous general store. He sold groceries, and he delivered. We lived on out Spencer Avenue and they delivered regularly out there.

Where Askew's Cleaners later was, was Tony's Drug Store. Tony used to deliver out there. I remember he had a little short fellow, black man, Solomon Shields, working for him. He used to deliver ice cream and various frozen concoctions to us when we were kids.

Dr. Patterson: You were talking of Tony Libbus.

Mr. Ward: Tony Libbus. Tony later moved his drug store across the street, and he ran the drug store until he retired several years ago.

Dr. Patterson: Tony Libbus was very good to my brother Simmons and myself and loaned us ten thousand dollars so we could build our surgical clinic and he charged us a very nominal rate of interest.

Mr. Ward: He was a nice fellow. His daughter is a pharmacist and she works downtown here at Bynum's Drug Store.

Dr. Patterson: Yes. Al, your parents owned and lived in a very fine old home on Craven Street. In the first block of Craven Street on the east side?

Mr. Ward: No. It was 53 Craven Street, now 228 Craven Street on the east side between Pollock and Tryon Palace Drive.

Dr. Patterson: I wonder if you'd tell me something about that house.

Mr. Ward: First let me tell you how they happened to move down there. Dad had built the bungalow on the south side of Spencer Avenue right after they were married in 1920, the house in which all of us were born. Then during the heart of the Depression, he built that two-story house which has been mentioned which later was occupied by a local architect, Ray Fuson. Ray Fuson, I think, bought it from dad.

In 1938, '39, my mother had become interested in antiques. At one point she almost bought the house that's now occupied by Hovey and Jo Aiken.

Dr. Patterson: That's Dr. Ashford's house on Pollock Street.

Mr. Ward: Right. She made the mistake of telling a friend that she was going to buy it and her friend talked to somebody else and Charlie Hall bought the house. Mom became aware of the fact that the house, which she still owns on Craven Street, was available. It was a very old house. We think it was built in 1792. It was built by a man named Isaac Taylor who came with one or more brothers from Scotland and became a very successful merchant. I think he owned the whole area which is known as Glenburnie Gardens, and that's the reason for the Scottish name Glenburnie. He owned that whole block. I think all of it. I've seen photographs which show large areas on each side of that house vacant. Anyway, Mom decided she wanted to buy that house.

I think she told Dad that she wanted to buy that house and was going to buy that house and it nearly caused a divorce in my family. Dad wanted to stay out there in Ghent. He had no desire to move downtown!

I'll say later, though, Mom has told me since Dad died that Dad told

her on a number of occasions that that turned out to be the finest thing he'd ever done because in his later years he lost his direct vision. He was able to walk from the house around to the office at 409 Pollock Street, at times, with a little help. He had his peripheral vision and he said he recognized that had they not moved down there that he would have had a more difficult time in his later years. He also enjoyed the restoration. Although he muttered a little bit about it, he enjoyed what they did to the house, the renovation, which mom did largely, with some help from him. But he was proud of the house as was my mother. At the time they bought the house in, I think December 1940, it had been cut up into apartments. Mrs. Colvin was renting it, Gerald Colvin's mother. The people who owned it agreed to sell it to Mom and Dad and sold it. We moved down there early the next year. I'm not sure whether it was January or February, but I remember it was cold as hell the night we moved down there and we all slept on the third floor in the front room, which was the room all the way across the front of the house, almost all the way, there was a hall there, but the large room on the west side of the house overlooking Craven Street. We just put mattresses down and slept there. We had a fire in the fireplace. Each of the rooms, in that house had fireplaces. It has been stated in some publications about it, the house was a merchant's home. His office was on the first floor where the living room is now. There was an entrance through what now is a window to the office so that it was not necessary to go through the house to come into his office. If you look at it you can see where the bricks

have been used to fill in that window. Mom and dad thoroughly enjoyed living there. She acquired many antiques and furnished the house with them, many of which are museum pieces.

Dr. Patterson: I keep hearing a story about two elderly ladies living on the third floor during the occupation of New Bern by the Union troops.

Mr. Ward: I think that's true. As a matter of fact there's a photograph in the house that shows them looking out of the third floor windows. I think they were Isaac Taylor's daughters. Several of his daughters never married as I recall. If you look at the south side of the house you will see a piece of metal standing out from the house which could have been used with a pulley on it to pull food up to the third floor. It was during that time that they had the yellow fever epidemic and that probably contributed to their remaining upstairs as much as anything else. Although it's customary to say that they wanted to avoid having to do anything with the Yankee troops.

Dr. Patterson: And so they just had their food pulled up to them.

Mr. Ward: As a matter of fact, at the time we moved down there, the attic was just that, it was an attic. We pulled lumber up using that same piece of metal stuck out beside the house. I say we, my brother and I, or my brothers and I. At that time Ken would have been ten years old. But we pulled lumber up there and a bedroom was built at that end of the house, on the south side of the house which I occupied as long as I was at home. I finished high school that same year and left. But until I did leave to go to school, I stayed in that room

in the attic. That was a long climb up four flights. That was rented later. Mom rented two floors. She rented the third floor and she rented the attic during the Korean War. She rented a part of during World War II and she also rented some of it during the Korean War.

During a hurricane, that whole window, which is a half round window with the flat half at the bottom, that whole fixture came out, was sucked out by a hurricane and was later rebuilt. Of course it was immediately closed in but then later rebuilt.

Dr. Patterson: Al, since you and I built our first two houses in Trent Shores, that area has changed a great deal.

Mr. Ward: Yes it sure has Joe. As you know, we had a dirt road out there for many years by choice. I remember those pieces of plywood on which you had lettered words to the effect "Drive carefully. Children playing ahead", which we nailed up on a tree, or you did.

That area belonged to my grandmother. My grandfather bought it and gave it to her. There were a number of acres. It was bordered on one side by the Sloan estate which was marked by Mill Creek also known as Whiskey Creek. When I was a youngster, there was a two-story log house out there on that creek at the mouth of that creek that my father had built for his mother. It burned in 1935. I was not at home at the time. I was a page in the legislature when it caught fire and burned. While I was in the service during World War II, Dad laid some lots off. None of them ever sold, fortunately. They were too narrow, too long. He had the lots running from the ridge on which your home is located all the way down to the water. Of course as Trent Shores

was laid out, and I helped him in doing that, later, we pulled the road down off the ridge so that it was on the base of the ridge so that it was high enough to get out of high waters, but left the ridge for construction. Muggins and I had come through here before any of it was laid off as I was on my way to Columbia University Midshipman School in June of 1944. This was before we were married of course, but we had gone out and picked out the lot on which we wanted to put our house where we did later build. I handled the sale of those lots for Dad and his sisters. We brought them along very slowly. We weren't anxious to sell them all at once. One thing of interest, I proposed restrictive covenants for the property. I told Dad that we were going to require any house built out there to cost at least \$10,000. He thought that would mean that we would never sell a lot. When I told him what my house was going to cost me, at that time, well, I'll tell you what it was, \$15,000, Dad urged me not to go ahead and build the house, but to wait until the things came down in price. As a matter of fact I ended up spending, including filling the marsh in front of the house, I ended up spending close to \$20,000. I did spend more than that after I added the carport. But quite a change over the years. Prices never came down!

Dr. Patterson: Have all the lots been sold out there now in Trent Shores?

Mr. Ward: In the original Trent Shores, no. We have some property in the triangle bounded by Trent Shores Drive, Virginia Avenue, and Abner Nash Road which have not been sold.

Dr. Patterson: That was such a wonderful place to live in and to have our children grow up in. We were out there in the woods and there were very few people around.

Mr. Ward: And my children cried every time a lot was sold.

Dr. Patterson: And we had boats down there on the water and we had picnics on the beach and it was a wonderful life.

Mr. Ward: It certainly was.

Dr. Patterson: Al, we've talked about many things and you have told us things that no one else has told us about New Bern and the way it developed. This has been a great interview. These three interviews have been great interviews and the Memories of New Bern Committee really thanks you for letting us meet with you.

Mr. Ward: I enjoyed it. I'm flattered that you thought I might add something to your program and I've thoroughly enjoyed it.

Dr. Patterson: You added a great deal to the program and we do thank you a lot. So I'll cut this off now.

END OF INTERVIEW.