

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

GROWING UP IN NEW BERN

PARTICIPANTS:

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON
ALEX "ECKY" MEADOWS
SPECIAL PROGRAM 1019

This is Dr. Joseph Patterson representing the Memories of New Bern Committee. This is a recording of a program given to the New Horizons group at the First Presbyterian Church on October 21, 1992. The title of the program is Growing Up In New Bern, and the participants are myself and Alex, a,l,e,x, (Ecky), e,c,k,y, Meadows. We will take turns speaking and telling of our experiences growing up in New Bern.

Ecky and I have worked every day on this program. We rehearsed it, and rehearsed it, and rehearsed it and we think it's going to be perfect. How many people here grew up in New Bern? Will you stand up. Let everybody see who.

I'm speaking for both of us to begin with, let me just say a word about your programs next month, our program next month. L. C. Scott is Leon Scott, Jr. He and his wife both were born in New Bern and grew up here, and if you want to get some other good memories of New Bern, Scotty can give them to you. His daughter is Dana, d,a,n,a, Scott, and she's the vocalist for your program. Catherine Latta was a next door neighbor of the Scott's out at Riverside. They grew up together and were very close. And those of us who have been in New Bern for awhile knew Catherine Latta and loved her. She was an absolutely great musician. She sang with the, was it the New York Opera Company? Philadelphia Opera Company. She had a distinguished career. When she stopped that, she came back to New Bern and was director of music here for a long time, and she was wonderful. She died about a year ago, was it, two years ago. Time passes. But we remember Dana, we remember Catherine and Scotty, of course, remembers

her and wants to do this.

Now Ecky and I grew up in New Bern, and we're first cousins, and the way we're cousins is that our mothers were sisters and they were the daughters of Senator F. M. Simmons, Furnifold McLendel Simmons, who was a United States Senator for thirty years representing North Carolina. He lived in New Bern. His house is on the corner of East Front Street and New Street, right across from the Bishop's Coor House.

That's where the Brazelton's now live. Ecky lived on South Front Street, that's now called Governor Tryon, what is it, Palace Drive, Tryon Palace Drive. It's hard to get used to these new names. Ecky's house was pretty much across from the Culligan Water place and Harvey Mansion. It's the Victorian house sitting way up high from the ground.

That's where he grew up. Vance Harper Jones lives there now. That's right.

I lived on New Street, one house from East Front Street, where Genevieve and Mark Dunn later lived. They've recently moved. The house is right behind the Bishop Coor House. So, this is where we come from.

Now to start with, let me just give you a little bit of background information on New Bern as it used to be. This was a small town. We're talking about the twenties and the early thirties for the most part. If we have time, we might get up to the fifties. But when we were boys, Ecky and I, this was a quiet town. In 1922, I know the population was 12,134. I don't think it increased much for a few years after that. New Bern consisted then of four parts basically, and some

of this has come out since we've been reminiscing and some things we didn't even realize until then. There was the downtown area, Ghent, Riverside, and the black community. These are the four sections. There was no Greenbrier. There was no Fairfield Harbor. There was no River Bend. There were no sub-developments around town. That's what it was. That was New Bern. And the black community, and James City across the river. Yeah, ok, and Green Springs Road.

Well, the black community began on George Street basically and extended back where Kafer Park is and the extension of Cedar Grove Cemetery and the Senior Citizens place and on back in there. That's where the big fire was.

Now, each area had its schools. The Ghent people had their school, the elementary school, the grammar school. So did downtown New Bern.

So did Riverside, and the black community had its schools all the way. So in younger years, we didn't get to know the folks out in Riverside and Ghent too much. There was no way to get out there. It was like a, almost like another city, but in high school, folks from Ghent and Riverside came down to the New Bern High School. Now the New Bern High, the New Bern schools were on the school green. You know where that is. Where the Academy Museum Building is. Well, there were four buildings on that ground then. The one next to the Academy Building, west of the Academy building, is gone. That was the grammar school, and the Academy stepped to five and six.

Where is Riverside and Ghent?

Response to member of group: Well, if you go out. Ok, well that's

a good question. If you go out National Avenue, past Cedar Grove Cemetery, that's Riverside. It's right on the Neuse River, out there. That's that whole section. You go, let's see, what I'll say, Ecky. How do you

ECKY: In other words, it's everything past where the old YMCA was. From there on out to the edge of, where the old 17 comes together, is, was Ghent.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: Now, on the school green were these buildings. The Academy Museum was one of the school buildings, and then the Bell Building where Bob Stallings and Margaret have made these fine apartments was a school building, and next to that was the high school building. That has now gone, of course, and Ben Jones' old house has been moved there, and that was right across the street from the old Pepsi Cola Factory.

But, anyhow, as we reached high school age, we got to know folks in other parts of town better. What I'm leading up to is this, that you'd think the downtown folks would have all been one solid community, but it didn't quite work out that way. Ecky and his buddies on South Front Street formed a definite group. The downtown young people, and I'm really speaking of our generation. I can't go ahead or back of this. The downtown folks formed their own group. Now it doesn't mean we weren't friends, because we were, but it was sort of like visiting somebody a long ways off if I went to South Front or Ecky came to New Street. If you draw a line down East Front Street to Pollock Street and take that line out to Queen Street, then follow Queen Street

back to the river, that's downtown. Everything south of Pollock Street, am I'm saying this pretty right, everything south of Pollock Street was the South Front Street boys.

ECKY: Union Point wharf rats.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: This made a difference in what happened to us and it's really interesting. The South Front Street boys, now I speak of the boys more than the girls although this sort of fits together. The girls had these attributes too. The South Front Street boys became outdoors people. People who knew the water and were on the water, who loved to fish, and they were entrepreneurs. The downtown folks, like myself, lead a much more staid existence. Although we were on the Neuse River, it didn't mean as much to us as the Trent River meant to Ecky and his crew. The waterfront down there on the Trent River was so bustling then it just sort of absorbed them.

In later life, here's what happened as a general rule. The South Front Street boys stayed in New Bern. The downtown boys left New Bern and went to medical school, or law school, to Naval Academy, or West Point, staid organized professions. The South Front Street boys made their way here on their own. Ecky says that the reason the South Front Street boys stayed here was because they loved New Bern and the reason the downtown boys left so they could make a lot of money. But you have to understand, that's a South Front Street boy talking.

So that's a little of the background of what we're going to talk about. We're planning just to sit up here and chat back and forth sort of if you folks weren't sitting out there, but we're sure are

going to kind of be conscious of you. But before we start, Ecky and I would like to give you our definitions of "Old New Bernians". This is what we have agreed on.

It must be understood that the terms "native New Bernian" and "old New Bernian" have different meanings. A native New Bernian is one who was born in New Bern regardless of age. On the other hand, "old New Bernian" is a state of mind. This perspective is reached when a New Bern resident concludes, 1) that New Bern has enough people, enough cars and has undergone enough changes. 2) that enough is enough and the status quo be now maintained and enjoyed. Such perspective is reached by new inhabitants in three to five years on the average after they are established in their residency. And it is generally acknowledged, that the best title to bear is "old native New Bernian".

Well, so much for the introduction. We better chat now. And Ecky in years gone by, I didn't get down to South Front Street as much as I would like to and for that reason and others, I just don't remember a whole lot about that area. How about telling me what South Front Street was like when you grew up and what life was like on South Front Street.

ECKY: Well, thank you, Pat. I'll get this thing right in a minute.

South Front Street started at Union Point. Union Point was an old lumber mill. It burned down before I was born, but they still had the site there, and it became the Meadows Company office, and mill, and warehouses. And then there was Crabby's Shop. Albert Crabtree was a machinist and he could make anything. Then we came to the dock

where the Pamlico cutter, U. S. Coast Guard Cutter Pamlico was moored, and she was there for twenty some years. I don't think she went out more than once every two or three years. She was still there. We knew we had her. Then next door to that was the ship yard. It belonged to the Meadows Company too. Dad was the ship builder and so he designed these boats and things that were built down there. Then there was the sugar warehouse and it just used for storage of sugar and big things there. That belonged to the Bishops. In front of that was the Harvey Mansion, and then coming on back was Shoot Hall's house. Shoot was the Seashore Transportation Company, manager of the company. He's retired down to Harker's Island. Then the next on the way was the Dill house. Aunt Bessie Dill was my Uncle Dick Williams' daughter, I mean was my father's cousin.

And back of her house was the old electric light plant. Her father ran that and he finally sold out to the city and the electric rates been going up ever since. Next door to that was my pony stable, and daddy first bought me a goat. And so I had the goat and run around in the mill yard there, around the warehouses and all, in a little cart. And one Sunday, I went in to pet the goat, and he didn't like it. So he started butting at me. So I grabbed him by the horns and started hollering. My older sister, Sara, heard me. So she came in.

She's a couple of years older than I am, and she grabbed his horns and said go get somebody. Well, I went on out and was looking around for somebody. I went over to the office and nobody there 'cause it was Sunday, and then something turned up and I lost track of it and

forgot. Finally, Uncle Sam Dill, who I said lived next door, came in and gave the goat a good swift kick and in the meantime, the goat had been chewing on sister's skirt. So, we went on from there. The, next door to that was Hilton Hudnell one of the members of the church here, his father's coal and wood yard. It was just a small area there it was right next to the railroad siding where he could get his coal in, and on the other side of the street was all the houses there. The, our house, that Joe Pat said, and then later on, the Patterson's and then Johnny and Buzz Mitchell, and Mitchell's Hardware, and Johnny taught school out here at Oak Grove. And then the McSorley's lived next door to, on the other side of, Vance Jones' house now. We moved over there later. And Gene and Virginia ran the Craven Foundry there on the corner of South Front and Craven. And further up the street was, Andy Fuller was, lived over Fuller's Music House where, you know, Lib and Andy's son Wade runs it now. So these are some of the people that we had there, and I'll turn it over now to Pat. He'll tell you something about it.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: What about Crabby's. Tell us about Crabby's.

ECKY: Crabby's was, dad gave Crabby the use of his warehouse down over the water after the, they quit using the mill and the thing because of the inefficiency of operation. So Crabby took, went inside and put us up some partitions and dressing rooms so we could go swimming down there, and put us up diving boards, and then bought us a pool table. And started a little club of the local boys on South Front

Street, and some of them came from a little further away. So this was our summer time hide out, hang out, where we could swim or, in the Trent River over there, and use it to dock a sailboat, I docked my sailboat down there. When I was about nine, dad built me a Sharpie, a twenty five foot Sharpie with an eight foot beam. And of course, it was a Sharpie rig. It had a single mast without main stays. So it was rugged to handle, but it would sail. And we enjoyed that. The, I guess the story about that was when we were out sailing one night, the gang. Now Joe Pat will tell you more about the gang later, but anyway. We were sailing around in the Trent River there. It was kind of a calm night and we weren't making a lot of waves, but we didn't worry about that. Then we started using the jib halyard to swing out over the water and swing back in. Well, Alma Hall Johnson, she was Alma Hall then, of course, swing out and one of the boys came over there to help her. And that's, the boat, of course, tipped over that side, and she didn't get to swing back in. So she dropped, ended up in the water. Of course, we rescued her and everything. We had a portion for that, but then we wrapped her up and we hoisted some of her clothes up on the jib. I didn't carry a jib then. We just used the main sheet, and, of course, hoisted them up there to dry out. She could, have them to wear home. Wrapped her up good in the blanket.

Well, when we got back to the dock, somebody had pulled on the jib halyard and gotten her brassiere tangled up in the pulley. So next morning I had to get up there early and climb the mast and unhitch the jib sheet.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: I could make a dirty crack here, but I won't. Ecky, I want to ask you a question. Was it safe to swim down at Crabby's? Was the swimming pretty good?.

ECKY: The swimming was good down there, of course it was right off the out fall for the East Front Street sewer, and naturally, next door, as I say, was the Cutter Pamlico, and she didn't have any land or place to put her sewage either. So we didn't worry about it. I been swimming in the Neuse River for sixty two years now, so I reckon it's all right.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: Well, I finally managed to get in Crabby's. I belonged to Dr. Hand's gang which was at the foot of Johnson Street where the old bridge used to be. And I always wanted to get in Crabby's but I didn't live on South Front Street and I finally got in because I was Ecky's and Bucky's first cousin, John Pat and Donald Patterson's first cousin, and they got me in Crabby's.

I don't know if you know this Ecky, but in the 1950's, Crabby had a stroke and as I recall, he was living in a single apartment on Metcalf Street. I'm not quite sure of that.

ECKY: Somewhere along in there.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: And I'm not, I don't know whether you called me or who called me. I was practicing surgery then and this was out of my line, but I went to Crabby and I took him to Kafer Hospital as my patient and I kept him on my service until he died. I'm sure I got Francis King to come in and really help with his treatment, but I figured, well, I've paid Crabby back a little bit for all he did

for us.

ECKY: I know he appreciated it too.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: Well, let me talk about how things were on East Front Street and the River Shore. The River Shore, and I'm speaking of that part of the river shore where New Street is right in the center. It goes from the end of Linden Street, which used to be Short Street down to Broad Street. That was a very rustic area.

There were no walkways there in those years. The walkway was put up in the thirties. The river shore was grass right down to a shell rock break water and it was a lovely place and there were bushes along the way and folks used to rest under those bushes. But it was a lot of fun on the river shore.

I used to gig fish. There were so many mullet swimming right off the break water that more than once I threw a gig into a school of mullet and gipped a fish and got a mullet. I don't think we ate them because right there was where the run off for the sewage occurred too, but the river shore was really great.

Now, I'll say more about East Front Street in a minute, but let me talk about the neighborhood I lived in on New Street. It's a very, very, it was a very interesting neighborhood. Our grandfather, the Senator, was on the corner. Across the street was Mr. Bishop, his wife, an elderly couple with no children, and he was a very prosperous merchant. Right behind my grandfather's house lived the man who owned the car dealership. My father was a physician, across the street.

We lived right next to Judge R. A. Nunn and his wife. We called her

Pinky and she had two girls, Eleanor and Elizabeth. Across from them, on New Street, was a couple, not very wealthy.

Right next, well, right across from the Nunn's house which was next to my house, where Johnny Dunn and Margaret live now, lived a black family. An elderly lady and her son named Harvey. Now this wasn't the kind of house you'd expect to see in that neighborhood.

It was a shanty, a long, sort of plank shanty that you'd expect to see maybe on a tobacco farm somewhere for a share cropper, and it was surrounded by a wooden fence, which was a pretty sorry wooden fence.

They kept animals in there, chickens and animals.

Ok, right next to Judge Nunn was a man who was a carnival man, and his name was Foote, f, double o, t,e, and he had a child, a boy named Sonny who was a pretty wild card, and Sonny knew a lot about sex and I used to like to listen to him, but I'd never go around with him. He always scared me.

Right next to that was a little house where a man named Ulrick lived. That's where Mrs. Joe McDaniel lives now. And then on the corner of Linden Street or Short Street and New Street where Sam Jones' apartments are, you may remember where they are, was another black family, named Barron, b,a, double r,o,n. Honey Barron and her husband and several daughters. Honey Barron used to clean chickens for the folks around there.

Linden Street was filled with very poor white people with little houses side by side all along Short Street. I'm going to call it Short Street. These folks were not only poor. They were tough. There was

a tough neighborhood right back of where we lived. Well, going up East Front Street from the Bishop's house, my father's partner, Dr. Jones lived there. And on the corner, Mr. Dunn and all his children, that's Mark Dunn and Johnny Dunn's father, and he was a well to do person. And then a judge lived in the house on the other side.

What I'm saying is, here we were in this little neighborhood with carnival people, black people, poor white people, and very well to do white people, and we got along just fine, at least as I remember it. And I don't remember my parents ever talking about it being wrong or anything inappropriate about it. And that went on for awhile.

Ok, let me start off on East Front Street, way up in the six hundred block. There used to be an old store there called the Taylor Bell Store, and that's where the grocery store, and folks in town could buy their groceries there and Ecky, did you buy candy there?

ECKY: Oh, yes.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: All of us bought Mary Janes there and now I'm told that some old couple lives in that house, and I. Can you imagine living in a grocery store? Now I hear they sell flags. Well Frances Francis knows about that store. That was her father's store and she lived upstairs for awhile before moving across the street.

Well, that's where Alice and I live now and it's really wonderful.

But as you go just beyond us, heading down East Front Street where there's a brick house. There used to be a filling station there. Ham Ferebee, the Ferebee family lived on New Street. They were all great athletes. Ham ran that filling station and we all knew the

Ferebees. That's where the bridge was. The bridge that you know, across the Neuse River, wasn't there. It wasn't there until the fifties. The bridge across the Neuse, went at the end of Johnson Street, it was an wooden bridge and it was washed away in the hurricane of '33, except for the draw bridge. But as you come down that street, the houses stay pretty much the same. Billy Hand lives on the corner of Johnson and East Front. There used to be houses behind him going to the wharf, but they were washed away in one of the hurricanes.

And just beyond that, his daddy, who was a dentist also, I think you all know who I'm talking about, Dr. Billy Hand, the dentist. Dr. Hand had a boy's club and it was a nice boy's club. It later became Troop 50, Boy Scouts. Then you go on down the street, and you come to where Short Street comes into East Front Street, Linden Street, and there's a house there next to the Maxwell house, which is being restored, and that was inhabited by the Justice brothers. Alec and Forney Justice and their sister. You know Carolyn Ashford, perhaps.

Carolyn lived in the house just beyond that house on the water. Well, that house was moved there. It didn't, it wasn't there when we grew up. The Pamlico, the Coast Guard Cutter Pamlico docked out from that area.

Going down the street beyond our grandfather's house on East Front Street, New Street and East Front, Senator Simmons' house, next to that a pharmacist, Bryan Duffy lived. Next to that the Claypooles who were very old, New Bern people lived. And next to that and now gone was the Broadfoot house. It was a beautiful house with a porch

going all the way across it. And next to that was the Shrine Building.

The Shrine Building was a beautiful Victorian house surrounded by this same fence that's there now, had a driveway going through it, coming back out. It was just a lovely place.

Now those, the Broadfoot house and this building are gone and there's a parking lot. Across the street were houses where those little apartments are and we knew all the people living there. The bridge was not there.

There was one house where the bridge joins the mainland and that was the Lumsden house and Mrs. Lumsden used to make deviled crabs and I went to her house many times to get deviled crabs for my folks. Next to that was a vacant lot. Then I think Dr. Civils, the dentist, had a house and our good friend, Billy Dawson, lived next to them and then I don't know who was on the corner. But there were very nice houses all along there. The Barbours...

Ok, that's my reference back there. On Pollock Street, where Pollock Street goes down to the river where there, these brick buildings, there were houses, wooden houses. I don't know whether they burned or washed away or what, but on the corner where there's a parking lot for the Holiday Inn was a very famous brick home. Called it Blackbeard's home, and the story was that Blackbeard lived there and had a tunnel underneath to the river, under the ground, which was entirely false because the house was built after Blackbeard died. But anyhow, the people would come and bother the folks living in that house. All the town wanted to know about Blackbeard and where the

tunnel was. That's gone.

The Holiday Inn then is sitting on an area where there used to be a lots of nice homes, but the land behind was vacant, and as boys and girls, we used to walk up and down that area a lot.

So that, that's a little bit about the way my area was. It was quiet. We played in the streets. If a car came along, we thought it was an injustice. There weren't that many cars anyhow so they didn't bother us very much. The streets were ours to play in. We didn't have any tv sets of course. Very few people had radios. We just played games and generally had a good time. And we've got a few stories about this that we might kick back and forth. Ecky, I know you've got some stories about that wilderness down there on South Front Street.

ECKY: Thank you. I think the next story I'm about to tell you is about the time I was eight years old. My daddy gave me a Daisy air rifle, single shot. So we went around and started practicing and we got pretty good. So after awhile all of us boys got together and said we're going on a big bird hunt. So we started working around the stables there, and in the mill yard, and 'fore long we had four or five house sparrows. We called them English sparrows then, but we picked, took them on back in the back of the yard there at our campfire and we were skinning them. We decided more or less not to gut them, and then we put them on the stick, and roasted 'em over the coals.

So we had a big sparrow dinner. No chicken. No pigeons. No, we couldn't, well, the air rifle just wasn't quite big enough to kill them.

We, down at the ship yard, you might be interested in that. As I say, dad was running that and the year I was eleven, Mr. Barbour who later started Barbour Boat Works was the foreman, and he hired me as a painter. I was working ten hours a day for fifteen cents an hour and six days a week, Saturday included. We were building these hundred foot menhaden boats you've seen a lot of them down around Morehead. They were wooden boats then. And, so, we were in the middle of them and there's an awful lot of first coat painting in the inside of one of those hundred foot menhaden boats. So I had a steady job all summer.

The other thing down there, about two years later they started the, building Meadows Flyers they called them. These are little fast racing outboards and in the B class which was 20 horsepower up, he built a sled. What you call a sea sled, and somebody else up in Rhode Island or other got a patent on it two or three years later, but he built one originally before that and he used it in that B class. And Shoot Hall, I was telling you about, was our main racing driver. And he won a lot of cups and things around New Bern, Wilmington, and eastern North Carolina in general. And then we built the, the last big boat we built was just before the depression, was a fifty foot sailing yacht for a Colonel Henderson out of Washington, D. C. And this came constructed with a glued hollow mast. This was the first time we'd done it around here, and so we had a big operation going on there.

I thought that a lot of you being sailors would be interested in the history of that.

The yard had three railways and originally they were all steam driven from the steam boiler over on the mill site, and they used the slats from the lumber mill as fuel. So they didn't have any fuel things, just a matter of sending a team of mules over to the lumber mill and loaded them on the slabs and bring 'em back. And later on they got a truck, but everything was a team of mules.

Then we had the, Union Point became the city dump and that was our haven. We enjoyed rummaging around in there. We found all kinds of good things. Particularly the old cars. We'd get in them. And then we found out that Goldman had a junk yard down there and he'd buy copper. And we found out too, that all these old automobiles had copper tubing for the gas lines. And we learned how to get that off without breaking or wasting it. And we made our spending money from stuff we had collected down there. We were recycling, even then. I'll let Pat talk to you some.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: Ecky, Mr. Goldman had his junk yard on South Front Street didn't he?

ECKY: Right.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: Just, going east from the Farmer's Market, in that block. Right. Well, I'll tell you a story about Raymond Goldman, his son. Raymond, young Raymond Goldman, was our contemporary and he was a nice guy and he certainly raised some fine children and has a fine wife and they run the junk yard out on the edge of town now. Raymond like all of us, used to go to the movies every Saturday afternoon. We, I think mostly of the Athens Theater although this

was true of the Masonic too. The Masonic Theater was where the Masonic Lodge is now and they were one of the two white theaters in the town.

We went there every chance we got, but at the Athens we would to on Saturday afternoons, there'd be a double feature western, Tom Mix and Hoot Gibson and all those fellows, and we all knew them and we loved them. And the place would be packed with all of us there, and Raymond Goldman was there somewhere. And right in the middle of the most touching or tender or quietly exciting time, Raymond would come out with this horse laugh that just reverberated through the whole building. It was like a bray almost and it would scare you half to death. Every Saturday we knew it was coming, and we didn't know where Raymond was. He might be up in the balcony. He might be downstairs, but we were all nervous until Raymond did his thing, and then we could enjoy the movie.

Well, I resolved that since he was getting such a reputation out of this that I was going to do him one better, and I did it. I had a special friend named Billy Caroon who lived not far from here. Sherman Lewis' house is on the corner over here and right behind it is where Billy Caroon lived with his family. Billy and I were blood buddies.

We would get together and walk down the street, down Hancock Street to Pollock Street and go to the Athens. Well Ecky, do you remember where Dolly Lassiter used to live.

ECKY: Yeah.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: Dolly and Jessie Lassiter. They lived in a house on Hancock Street which was moved to the corner of New and

Metcalf by Bob Stallings and Margaret, and that's where they lived for many years until they moved on to their apartments on the school green and now Simeon Adams and Karen live there. That house was on Hancock Street and I noticed as we would walk to the movies, that they had flowering bushes in the front yard, and these flowering bushes attracted the biggest, the most beautiful butterflies you have ever seen. So one Saturday, I got a great big paper bag and on the way to the theater, I caught some of those butterflies. I guess about twenty of them and put 'em in the paper bag. And in the movie when it was dark and quiet and very tense, I opened that bag and let those butterflies out. And you've never seen such a mess in all your life.

It looked like bats were flying all around. The screen was filled with all these flying things and I think that I beat Raymond.

(Response to crowd: I don't think he did it that day.)

Well, I mentioned Sonny Foote, what a, he's our, my neighbor and what a tough fellow he was. Sonny and I weren't really great friends.

As I say, he was older and wiser and more experienced, but every now and then we did things together. And one of the things we did was really great. We had a trolley system in those days and the trolley car ran right up and down Craven Street, and they ran all over town.

They ran out to Ghent. They ran out to Riverside. That's how a lot of people got around. Well, they were powered by a pole on the top to an electric wire, and Sonny and I went to the corner of New and Craven Street and strung a string, it might have been fishing line so it wouldn't be seen, from a tree on one side to a pole on the other

side. So when that trolley came along it knocked the arm away from the wire and stopped the trolley. We were hiding and nobody could see us, but we could see what was going on, and we did this enough times so that the conductor, when he would get to the corner, he would stop before getting to the corner and look for the wire. And most of the time, we hadn't put it up anymore, but we figured, well, we've won this game because even without putting anything up, we're making that guy stop.

We didn't have a lot of fire crackers in those days. As I recall, they were hard to come by, but we had a way of doing things. We made gun powder out of chemical sets, and we learned that if we would get a can. Say like a coffee can is today and punch a hole in the bottom with an ice pick, put a little glass of water on the ground, drop a few calcium carbide crystals in the water, put that can over that real quickly, and light a match to that little hole, that the acetylene gas would explode and blow that can way up in the air. And we used to have contests to see who could blow theirs the highest.

Ecky, I don't know if you remember that I ran a store on East Front Street. Do you remember that?

ECKY: Yeah.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: Well, my uncle, Albert, was with the Mill Supply Company and that was located on South Front Street. I guess it was right next to Goldman's yard.

ECKY: Yeah, it was right down in that area anyway.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: That's where all that clearing has been

done now across from the Farmer's Market. Uncle Albert let me have two Kelvinator boxes. Kelvinators were just being sold in those days and they were thin wooden boxes, and I got 'em home somehow, and I put them together and made a little store with

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: Well, this, I took a partner in. I took Billy Caroon in as a junior partner. He was my best friend, but the reason I took him in was because his mother made salted peanuts, and she packaged them and sold them for a nickel a package. They were called Mary Maid Peanuts and they were very popular in New Bern for a long time. They were sold in all the groceries, all the stores, but she gave us these free. So Billy became a junior partner. My mother made sandwiches and I made lemonade. And this was called Pat's Place and we had a big sign over the top, and it really worked well.

The people would come along, tourists would come along in their cars and stop to get their lunch there on the way to the bridge, and I guess we'd have been there to this day if we hadn't eaten up all the profits.

Sonny Foote used to get in a lot of trouble with his dad, and I mean these were physical events, and one time Mr. Foote just threw Sonny out of the house, and Sonny didn't have any place to sleep. So he asked me if he could sleep in the store on the river shore, and I said sure. Well, the police saw him one night going in there to go to bed and they thought he was going to rob my store. Now I didn't have any license for this store. Nobody ever bothered me about that.

So they arrested Sonny and I had to get him out of jail by saying

that I permitted this, and the next day, Mr. Dawson, who owned the Sun Journal, and was the father of my other good friend, Billy Dawson, ran a front page story about Pat's Place and all that happened down there. I thought that was really good.

Ecky, let me just mention a couple of other things. I used to love to fly kites. I still do. I've got a bunch of kites up in our attic. I fly them every now and then. One of them's from Tienamin Square in Beijing, a little kite. But, we'd go down to this vacant lot where the Holiday Inn is now and fly kites. Somebody built me a kite made out of cloth. It was as tall as I was, and when it got up with a good wind, it took a strong string to hold it. Well, the Lumsden house, as I said, was right there and radios were coming in, and the Lumsden's had a chimney and they had their radio aerial attached to their chimney running over to a tree or something somewheres else.

Well, my kite caught in that wire and it pulled the whole blasted chimney down, and the bricks fell inside and put soot all over the house, and my folks had to pay for that.

There's one more kite story. This you'll find hard to believe, Ecky. One day I was flying that big kite and you know how the lagoon is, or the bay is, down at East Front Street's river shore. Well, it was wider than that in those days, because the bridge wasn't there, but it was the same configuration. So there was a concrete wall over here and a concrete wall over here. Well the wind was blowing from south to north and the kite was flying low, and the string either broke or slipped out of my hand and landed in the water. There was enough

drag to that string so the kite didn't flop down, but it just kept moving away. So I went out to East Front Street and caught a ride in a car and went down to the other promitory and waited for that kite to come and I grabbed it as came over. Do you believe that?

ECKY: No.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: When I tell that to my children, they say, oh, Daddy! When I tell it to my grandchildren, they just slap their legs and laugh and walk out of the room. But it happened.

Well, let's see. As I reviewed the stories that I'm telling, the stories you're telling, I see that you all, South Front Street, were not only better entrepreneurs, you were more wholesome than we were. On Short Street there was a girl named Maggie Bell Anderson, but we always fought with the people on Short Street. They had young people, and in our back yard we had a fence with knot holes in it and we could see when they'd come along and we'd throw a piece of coal at 'em when they'd throw things back at us. It was quite a war. Well, there was a younger girl there, a red headed girl named Maggie Bell Anderson. She was, she was full of life all right and she developed a particular dislike for my very good friend Billy Dawson who lived on East Front Street. I don't know why she hated him so much, but one day on the school green, she caught up with Billy. And Billy was older and bigger. She caught up with Billy and climbed up on his back and grabbed his hair with both hands and pulled as hard as she could and Billy couldn't shake her loose and he ran around that school yard just hollering.

A Mitchell Hollowell lived on that street and Mitchell told me something I've never forgotten. He said if you pick up a toad frog, you're going to get warts all over your hands, and I haven't touched a toad frog since then.

Well, Ecky, there are a lot of other things we can talk about. Do you think we ought to hit some of these others, or do you think these folks are ready for bed.

ECKY: I think they're ready for bed probably.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: Well, maybe we'd better, better close this out. It's been fun and we could go on a long time, but the, you know, enough's enough, as I said earlier. I want to ask Ecky one more question. Ecky, what in the world were you doing in the middle of the Pacific Ocean on Eniwetok Island in April of 1945?. I know you were captain of a ship. Was it a pleasure yacht?

ECKY: Yep. I had command of a LST 505. She was not a pleasure yacht. She had a flat bottom and she rode high in the bow. So every wave you felt all the way down from the bow to the stern. We were out heading for the Philippines and then on up. So we were kind of diddling. The first thing you know I went into the Officer's Club there and here was Joe Pat. We met up right out there in the middle of the Pacific. So we had a good time talking for awhile there.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: Your ship carried a lot of gasoline and you were in trouble sometimes.

ECKY: We were the gasoline station for the boats in Okinawa during the Kamikaze raids. Our top deck was full of fifty five gallons drums

of gasoline and we'd dole these out each morning so they would have this kind of gasoline to run their smoke pots and their fogging machines. And down below, we had the smoke pots. So we were ready for the Kamikazes and one of them tried to come down, but we and the other ships around there were able to knock him down 'bout a hundred feet off our bow, and so, we were lucky.

DR. JOSEPH PATTERSON: Well, Ecky, I was out there on a pleasure boat called the Florence Nightingale and we were headed for Paradise Island, Okinawa. Now I had one experience with a Kamikaze plane. We unloaded in the rain and it was a bad time. We couldn't get all the supplies from the beach to where we were going to set up our field hospital. So the next day, I was in charge of a loading party to go get some of these supplies and Okinawa had a huge sea wall on it. Alice and I saw it later in 1986 and couldn't believe what we'd did, but this wall was breached enough so we could get a truck trough and get on the beach and go find our stuff. And the ships were all filled, filling Buckner Bay up there. And I had all these enlisted men with me and we were doing our thing just fine, and we looked up and saw a Kamikaze plane. We thought it was heading right for our heads, and there was no way to climb that sea wall. It was just too tall. Impossible to climb it, and we climbed that thing just like it wasn't there! And as I saw it later, it just seemed impossible to do and the plane did hit a ship right off the beach.

Anyhow, it was wonderful seeing Ecky out there. I couldn't believe it any more than you could believe it, but there we were.

Well, we agreed that in closing, we would like to read a poem, and this is the end of it for us. This poem, it may sound sad, but it isn't meant to be sad. It's meant to be a poem of celebration of the old folks in New Bern who grew up here and knew each other and have stuck together all through the years. This could apply to any town, I guess, any small town, but it was written for New Bern and it's called The Old Crowd.

THE OLD CROWD

The old crowd has gathered again
But numbers one less than before
Heads shaking, limbs creaking, joints aching
Squirming in pews, upright and indifferent
Seeking some ease for old brittle bones
Survivors in a world now changed
Relics clinging to their past
Still cherishing the Sunday drive
And not the race down fast lane roads

Outside the church they all shake hands
And hug and kiss each other there
with soft sweet smile they say to friends
I haven't seen you since last time

Inside they look around to see
Who could make it on this day
They note more heads are white with snow
And more walk, now with help of cane
They converse in gentle tones
Until the family, dear old friends
Now bowed with grief, come walking in
Then every ancient voice is hushed

The cemetery, filled with friends
From early times, now in quiet sleep
Welcomes them on their return
As stones speak out in silent voice

As they gather near the tent
They laugh and chat with one another
Until the pastor reads the word
Then a hush, like break of day
Falls on the crowd and on the land
The family then is each embraced
And all depart the sacred spot
But pause beside some special stones

They are the old ones of the past
Bound by heritage and love
To time long gone and to each other
When the town was quiet and small
When all were friends, and life had glow
Like full moon in a clear night sky

They mourn their friend now lost to them
But face today with head held high
They know their time is passing on
Yet they know too that they possess
Sweet memories of a splendid world
And there is pride, and no regret

Together, bound by magic bonds
They hold hands and march right on
Accepting what the future holds.

So we've enjoyed this and thanks for asking us to be here.

Dr. Joe Pat and Ecky did themselves right well and we all had a good evening tonight with good food and once more before we say good bye to each other for the evening, let's just give them one more loud applause.

END OF TAPE