

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

CALLAGHAN JOSEPH PATRICK "CALLIE" NEWMAN

INTERVIEW 411

This is Marea Kafer Foster representing the Memories of New Bern Committee. My number is 400. I am interviewing Callaghan Joseph Patrick Newman, interview number 411. The co-interviewer is Charles Kimbrell, number 1200, and interview number for Mr. Kimbrell will be 1202. We are in Mr. Newman's home at 3140 Country Club Road in New Bern. Now, Callie, if you will give me your personal history of your birth date, where you were born, parent's names, and all of that please.

Mr. Newman: I was born in Fairfield Hospital which was owned and run by Dr. Caton. It was on Queen and North Craven Street. I was born April 14, 1916 at 5:30 in the morning. My mother's name is Mary Ellen Colligan Newman, and they called her "Mamie" Newman. My father's name is Lawrence Christopher Newman. I had one brother and his name is Lawrence Colligan Newman.

MF: He became a Priest, didn't he?

Mr. Newman: For forty-one years.

MF: Which Diocese was he in?

Mr. Newman: He was ordained in the Raleigh Diocese, but he liked the western part of the state so well that when they made two Dioceses he joined the Charlotte Diocese.

MF: Wasn't he known as "The Building Priest?"

Mr. Newman: "Building Priest" of North Carolina. He built thirty-three churches, homes, schools, constructed thirty-three buildings in his life time.

MF: That's a wonderful legacy. Now, I want to ask you about your Army service.

Mr. Newman: On the fourth time, they took me in the Army. I was sworn in on December 8, 1942. I stayed at Fort Bragg in the Supply section putting clothes on selectees until May of 1945 when the European war was over. They called my name and got a cadre and I went to Camp Gordon, Augusta, Georgia and set up a separation center in the Supply section.

I had fifty ladies working for me on sewing machines, and we gave the soldiers a clean outfit, put their braids on, their emblem on, the hash marks on, put the braid on the cap, and put a "ruptured duck" on them, and got them fixed so they could be discharged from the Army.

MF: What's a "ruptured duck?"

Mr. Newman: I've got one around here somewhere. It showed that you'd been discharged from the Army.

MF: Is it like a ribbon?

Mr. Newman: No, it's a little gold thing sewn in right on your left breast.

Charlie Kimbrell: It's a little emblem.

Mr. Newman: I stayed in the Army until February 13, 1946.

MF: And you were honorably discharged?

Mr. Newman: Honorably discharged as a Tech Sergeant.

MF: You never got overseas, all of your duty was here?

Mr. Newman: No, I never volunteer for anything.

MF: I can't say as I blame you. Well, now I'm going to turn the interview over to Charles Kimbrell because he wants to talk to you about the politics of New Bern.

CK: Callie, I don't think we need to lead you a whole lot in that regard. You've been here since 1916 and grew up here, and you were in a prominent New Bern family who was always involved in the political betterment of the community in the area. So, unless you just simply run out of talking, we just want you to start recalling and reminiscing on some of the political episodes that you recall and the personalities.

Mr. Newman: The 4th Ward ran New Bern because they had the biggest ward, and when you voted back in those days you voted for every ward. There were five wards; first ward, second ward, third ward, fourth ward, and fifth ward. The fourth ward ran from George Street to the end of the city limits which was Ghent. We did have some characters including myself. When I got in politics, my cousin who I was named after, he was mayor in 1910 and he died in March of 1944, and he would have me on election day, I didn't have to have a driver's license but I drove a car, and the fourth ward was housed down there close to Joe Anderson's Drug Store and Lizzie Ablen's Grocery Store. There was a lot of room for people to stand there because Broad Street hadn't been widened then. I could be standing there and somebody would walk up behind me and put money in my pocket and then give me an address down on a long walk, no disrespect, and I'd go down to "long wharf" and they'd ask me who sent me down here? and I'd say, "Well, Helen Huff sent me down here." Helen Huff, he was the sexton of the cemetery, and he was a big politician. So,

I'd go down there and she'd say, "Well, I gotta have a box of society snuff." So, I'd go to the store and get a box of society snuff and come back and she was ready to go vote. I said I did things I wasn't really proud of, but on my way back I'd say, "Who you voting for?", and she says, "Well, I'm voting for Johnny Jones", and if I was working for McCarthy I'd say, "Okay, we'll just mark McCarthy out and you go ahead and go in there and vote." I'd pulled up there in front of the place" She'd go in and put her vote in the ballot box and I'd take her back home. The time I got back, Carter Tisdale, he was superintendent of the streets, he'd have somebody for me to go pick up. One of the oldest tricks they had, say we'd have two people on our side on the poles, and the other man was against us, 'cause I never saw it happen, but they'd get that man who was against us and they'd take him over to Joe Anderson's Drug Store and buy him a co-cola, and while he was gone they'd vote all the dead. I say, nothing to be proud of but I mean that's how politics was!

CK: Fourth Ward politics!

Mr. Newman: Yeah, fourth ward politics! It was controlled by a few people; Carter Tisdale, Helen Huff, and Frank Hackney. He was in the concrete business and the city bought all their benches from him and things like that, they'd be made out of concrete. He would have somebody for me to go pick up. So, I worked all day long driving a car, fifteen or sixteen years old, bringing people back and forth to the fourth ward.

CK: Buying all of them snuff?

Mr. Newman: Snuff, pipe tobacco, buying them a drink of whiskey, most anything they wanted, they would give it to them before we got them to vote.

CK: If they weren't talking right though, you'd just tell them, well, we'll just put a "X" by this person's name. You don't want him and that leave the others to get elected.

Mr. Newman: That's right. Give them the ballot and they'd go in. Back in those days everything was paper ballot, and I would go in with them and I'd say, "Mrs. Smith, she wants me to help her with her voting." So, the register man said, "Okay." So, go behind the curtain and we saw that she voted the right way and come out and put it in the box. Some nights they voted so much up there they'd be two, or three o'clock in the morning counting the votes. MF: This happened in a lot of towns not just in New Bern.

Mr. Newman: I'm just picking!

CK: Yeah. I remember back home, it was pretty much that same way.

Mr. Newman: But the big politicians that were in the fourth ward were; Helen Huff, Carter Tisdale, Frank Hackney, George Price, Louise Perry. Back in those days, we don't have them today, we'd call them "ward heelers" including myself.

CK: Some of the older people involved in city government when I came here, like Mayor Scott, he had already served his term. Do you remember Mayor Scott's tenure in city government, Leon Scott?

Mr. Newman: I was young. I remember Mayor Scott, but I wasn't affiliated with him all of his life.

CK: How about some of the other folks that were involved in- directly in city government? Now, you were probably rather young, but do you remember Johnny Rhodes, a tax collector?

Mr. Newman: Johnny Rhodes, yeah I remember Johnny Rhodes.

CK: Then there was a little short, chubby, white man, Mr. Jack Hellinger.

Mr. Newman: Mr. Jack Hellinger had a great personality. He was always alderman from the first ward until Frank Patterson died and then he became city clerk.

CK: I don't know whether you recall much about the county Commissioners back during the early and late Twenties and Thirties, but how about our state representatives or Congressional representatives? Who of them did you know?

Mr. Newman: I was too young, but Abernathy was in office.

CK: Charles Abernathy.

Mr. Newman: He was in office when he was defeated in 1932. When he was defeated by Graham Barden in 1932, the last thing he did up in Washington he got money to build us a new Post Office in New Bern and Will Rogers said in his paper he said, "I don't know where New Bern, North Carolina is, but will you please, because the Congressman has just been defeated and he donated something like \$300,000 to build a

Post Office in New Bern, so, will you please send your mail by New Bern, North Carolina in care of me so that they can get some business there!" (Laughter) It was funny then in 1932, but seven years later New Bern's Post Office was too small! Camp Davis started, instead of sending the mail to Wilmington, they'd send the mail to New Bern to go to Camp Davis. Then Camp LeJeune started and the mail had to come through New Bern. That was in the Forties. In 1941 Cherry Point started, so the mail came to New Bern. So, the Post Office was too small. They couldn't handle all the mail that had to go to all the outlying fields like Pollocksville, out on the Outer Banks, Ocracoke, and the Post Office became too small. When they put Post Offices in Camp Davis and Jacksonville and Havelock, the New Bern Post Office got back to its size.

CK: You mentioned Congressman Barden, known locally or referred to as "Hap" Barden. I was personally acquainted with Congressman Barden, and we did a lot of fishing together, but do you recall anything in particular about Congressman Barden's efforts in the behalf of the city of New Bern or the area, and specifically maybe in reference to Cherry Point?

Mr. Newman: There were two factions in New Bern at that time. They never could get together. That was Hap Barden and his crowd, which is Laurence Stith and a few more people, and on the other side was Libby Ward, he ran the other fraction. By 1940, 1941, Congressman Barden, all he had to do was say the word that he would put a power plant in New Bern out where Lawson Creek Park is now. They wanted to put a Power plant

out there, but the Ward fraction and the Barden fraction could never get together. So, we did not get a big electrical plant for electricity to go to Camp LeJeune and to Cherry Point.

MF: What a shame. Couldn't they compromise?

Mr. Newman: No, they never did compromise. It's like Laurence Stith, he was a very popular man. A fellow named Burl Hardison ran against him and Libby Ward had so much power that he put in Burl Hardison instead of Laurence Stith.

CK: Didn't he serve in the legislature himself, Libby Ward?

Mr. Newman: Libby Ward was a Senator. He controlled the Senate for years and years, but he never could, him or his good friends, never could get the right people over the state of North Carolina so he could run for Governor or his friend Senator John Larkin.

CK: It was his intent to run for Governor, wasn't it?

Mr. Newman: Yeah, but he never could get the Machine behind him. They called them "machines" back in those days, a Ward machine and a Barden machine.

MF: So Libby Ward was a North Carolina State Senator?

Mr. Newman: That's correct, for years and years and years. He had a "fluky" named Johnny Simpkins from Vanceboro.

If you're in the Sir Walter Hotel in Raleigh, Johnny would come in with two bottles of whiskey every afternoon. Mr. Ward never took a drink, but his friends, after the stores closed, knew where they could go find a bottle.

CK: I'm sure you recall Sam Whitehurst, do you remember?

My friend Sam Whitehurst served a number of terms in the legislature, and he served during the time they had all the controversy about what to name the state higher educational system; like N. C. State and Carolina and all the other colleges. Do you remember that fight and how long it went on?

Mr. Newman: No, I don't really remember that fight.

CK: It went on for several sessions of the legislature. Of course they only met once every two years. They did not meet but once a year. They didn't have any interim sessions. This went on almost throughout Sam's tenure in the legislature until they finally came on to settle on how they are named today.

Mr. Newman: The reason Sam left the legislature, he got a big job at the Bottling works.

CK: Oh yeah. He became Director of Bottlers Association of North Carolina.

Mr. Newman: So, that's the reason he quit legislation. I think Jim Sugg took over and his wife made him quit.

CK: I don't know. On the local scene, any individuals that never had public office but were just active partisan people? Any names other than those like yourself that you recall, and some of the shenanigans that ya'll might of gotten into?

Mr. Newman: Cut that thing off and I'll tell you a good one!

MF: I can't tape it, can I?

Mr. Newman: No.

CK: I know some of the people that were employed that worked for the city and on into several years after I came here like; Mr. Scott, George Scott's father.

Mr. Newman: Yeah. Fred Scott, he was Superintendent of Streets. He took Carter Tisdale's place.

CK: Bill Bartling?

Mr. Newman: Bill Bartling, he worked for his brother-in-law's electric business which is down on Pollock Street close to the Metropolitan Club, next to the Metropolitan Club. His brother-in-law ran an electrical business, that's John Tolson.

CK: Was that Colonel Tolson's father?

Mr. Newman: Lt. General Tolson's father, one of ours. Lt. General John Tolson was one of the famous boys came from Ghent. He was in the Invasion of Normandy. So, Bill Bartling, which was his uncle, I'm pretty sure John died, Bill Bartling lived across the street from Frank Godfoy. He was the Superintendent of Lights in New Bern. So, Bill Bartling went to work for the city of New Bern in the electrical department and worked up to superintendent of the electrical department.

CK: I listed a few controversial issues that occurred during my almost fifty years here, widening of Broad Street?

Mr. Newman: Yes. I remember widening of Broad Street and three or four people like to of went broke. Even a whiskey store couldn't do any business because they had no parking place.

CK: That's right. How about the controversy surrounding

the chlorination of the city water supply, do you remember that?

Mr. Newman: No, I don't remember that. I do remember Helen Huff's son-in-law, Dave Brinson, he was in charge of the Water and Light Power plant which was run by sawdust, great big piles of sawdust. Kind of a Roper Lumber Mill; Pine Lumber Company, Slater Lumber Company.

CK: Plenty of it!

Mr. Newman: Yeah, pine sawdust. All three mills were doing good business. It was the Depression but it was good business.

MF: Callie, how did you run a plant on sawdust?

Mr. Newman: Just like they're running that brand new plant right out here on wood chips.

CK: In a boiler.

MF: Oh, I see, just like coal or wood.

CK: Yeah. It's blown in. High combustion chambers in it. Combustion is pretty significant, and of course when you're boiling then you generate your steam and your steam of course is what powered the turbines. Like Callie just said, right out here at the Industrial Park they're using chips gotten from the Forestry Industry. This is not a new technique at all.

MF: That interest me, and nothing's new really when you think about it.

Mr. Newman: Anyway, while I was gone in the Army, they put some diesel motors in New Bern. The building is still

standing. They used them for a few years, and somehow they sold the diesels to Starkey, Florida. I remember that much. The city of Starkey, Florida bought those diesels to run their power plant, and New Bern changed over to Carolina Power and Light Company. From then on, every time we had a wind blow, our electricity came from Wilmington, and every time the wind would blow we would have no lights in New Bern.

CK: That transition took place in 1953. All the power was purchased from them and the diesel generators were all sold to, as Callie says, to Starkey, Florida.

Mr. Newman: I was at Camp Blanding. I never will forget it because I took troops there. I got to deliver troops also while I was in the Army, and selectees. I returned to Starkey, Florida and got off the train, troop train it was, a man says, "You can't get back to Jacksonville." He says, "Sue and me will be through here in about an hour", said, "but they won't let you on." So, a bunch of us got out there on the train track, and when they train finally stopped all of us jumped on the train and got back to Jacksonville, Florida.

CK: Callie, you've mentioned several times, selectees. I'd like for you to explain that for posterity, the difference between selectees and volunteers.

Mr. Newman: Selectees were people who had to register for the Draft in 1940. When your name came up you went to a local doctor, and then if he passed on you they'd send you to Fort Bragg to be examined again. If you were selected, they gave you depending how bad the war was, gave you one week, two

weeks, or three weeks to come home to get your business straightened out because some people were married and had children. So, when they would come in, we called them selectees. We put uniforms on them and they were shipped out all over the United States to Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, California, Texas, Massachusetts, Virginia.

CK: I was of course of age at that time, and I was interested in hearing some other person who was involved at that time to make that explanation because there's not many people around that still remember that.

MF: I didn't know about selectees. I thought everybody was drafted or a volunteer. Is a selectee the same thing as a volunteer? I know a volunteer is when you go sign up.

Mr. Newman: Yeah. A volunteer is different. A volunteer you have to sign up and you get a different serial number. Selectees have one serial number and volunteers had another serial number.

MF: Would a selectee be the same as someone who was drafted?

Mr. Newman: Yes, they were drafted.

CK: Callie, this is not necessary political, but anything that's as devastating as a hurricane, and certainly a number of those hit the city of New Bern and had an impact upon the city, and you lived through all the bad hurricanes here in New Bern.

Mr. Newman: Now, the first hurricane I remember is 1933. That was pretty rough.

CK: That brought about eight feet of water in here too, and it was a very devastating hurricane. You recall some particular incidence that occurred during that hurricane?

Mr. Newman: The Neuse River Bridge blew away. Now, I remember if you wanted to go to Bridgeton, you come down Johnson Street and the time you'd get to the draw, they had a temporary bridge draw that went around like that and you had to drive it very slow until you got on the other side and come back up on the other side then go on to Bridgeton around the draw.

CK: In other words, the draw went out then.

Mr. Newman: Yeah, and part of the bridge went out.

CK: New Bern was such an active political partisan background, and actually in most of the country, but New Bern was very intensely partisan politics. Back in 1943 or 1944 they raised the question of going to a city manager form of government.

Mr. Newman: I'm sorry, but I was in the Army at that time. I don't know what was going on around New Bern.

CK: There was an election of course, or they put it to the voters, and it was defeated about I'd say four to one initially. Then, four years later it was put on the ballot again in 1947 I believe it was, and it passed about two to one.

Mr. Newman: The only city manager I really knew very well was Greg Barnhardt. He was a good man. He left here and went somewhere.

MF: He went to Hickory.

CK: Yeah. Hickory was a much larger city than New Bern was.

Mr. Newman: We had one Chief of Police that didn't stay here very long. He lived out there close to me on the next block, an ex-marine Colonel.

CK: Chief Pearsall.

Mr. Newman: Yeah, Pearsall. People in New Bern and him couldn't think alike.

CK: There was a little bit of controversy about that too.

MF: What was that controversy, Callie, would you like to tell us?

Mr. Newman: All I know is he wanted to run the policeman like they were Marines.

CK: That's correct. He was strictly military, and he also was a strict disciplinarian. Then too, we had long time Chief, Chief Belangia.

Mr. Newman: We had Chief Bryan before Chief Belangia.

CK: Chief Bryan before Chief Belangia, and Chief Balangia was in office when a new administration was elected and went into office. There was considerable controversy in the town about that too as well as the newly selected Chief.

MF: Taking you back, how did Kafer Park get it's name? It's quite a controversy about that.

Mr. Newman: Kafer Park as I've always known it, after the big fire and they built Kafer Park, and they named it

after your granddaddy.

MF: Do you remember what happened that they named it after him?

Mr. Newman: Well, it's just like down there at the fire house. I always thought your granddaddy was the Mayor right before Lynn Scott.

MF: I don't remember hearing that. My grandfather was an Alderman, I know that.

Mr. Newman: Well, he's a very popular man, and it'd always been Kafer Park. It was after your granddaddy, it wasn't after an Oscar Kafer.

MF: Right. It was after Alfred Kafer, Sr.

Mr. Newman: I remember we had an Oscar Kafer down there if you remember him. Your daddy used to run the movie house.

MF: I sure do.

Mr. Newman: I didn't know. I didn't know if you were that old or not.

MF: Yeah, I'm that old Callie. I don't want to admit it, but I am. (Laughter) Callie, let me ask you, could everyone vote when you were growing up? I mean, did you have to pay a poll tax?

Mr. Newman: No, we didn't have to pay no tax, but everybody couldn't vote because everybody couldn't say the Constitution of the United States. We learned in the fourth ward, God rest their soul, but Abernathy tried to put everybody on the books to vote to try to beat Barden.

MF: Was this known as the Abernathy ballot box affair?

Mr. Newman: I don't know about that but he'd put everybody on the books. He had a good tough poll holder like Frank Shriner or later who came in I think he was a poll holder too, Will Odum. I'm not sure, but anyway, when some black person come in there he had to say the Constitution of the United States and anyone they did not want on the books, he didn't get on the books.

MF: Oh, I see. I couldn't even do that today, but I want to vote badly enough that I'd go learn it.

CK: Do you recall Mayor Lupton?

Mr. Newman: Oh, Mayor Lupton, yeah, I recall Mayor Lupton. He ran a canning factory in the car barn. A car barn is where they kept the street cars between Spencer Avenue and Park Avenue, on the first block of Spencer Avenue. He ran a tomato plant, a canning plant down there. Mayor Lupton was very popular, and he was a good man. He was an Alderman too, if I recall right.

CK: That's right. He was a strong supporter and booster of the city of New Bern.

Mr. Newman: Yeah. He'd be at every occasion. You'd see Mayor Lupton there.

MF: But no controversy around Mayor Lupton?

MR. Newman: Not as I know of. All I remember is that canning factory that he had. After New Bern-Ghent Street Railways sold the street cars and the railroad to some company and they sold it to Japan and they shot them back at us. Mack Lupton put in a car barn. The car barn should of been over

near you when you were in the first grade.

MF: I went to St. Paul's my first year in school, but yeah, we lived on Park Avenue and it probably was.

Mr. Newman: Yeah, a brick building right between the two streets. That was the car barn. That's where they put them to sleep at night time.

CK: Callie, were you familiar with, or acquainted with, or did I tell you? She was noted and later become a photographer but she also started out as a painter. She was also one of the first if not the first lady member of the North Carolina National Guard.

Mr. Newman: I knew Bayard Wooten.

CK: (Laughter) I almost spelled her name out for you, but I wanted to see if her name would bounce in your mind that quick! You knew her personally?

Mr. Newman: No, not personally but I knew of her. I knew Mrs. Moulton was sister or some relation to her, and Mrs. Disosway was related to her. Which, Mrs. Disosway was Mrs. Moulton's mama.

MF: I think the connection was on Mr. Moulton's side. I think Mr. Moulton was half-brother to Miss Wooten.

CK: I was acquainted with Miss Wooten myself. When we were first married, we lived at 206 Change Street, which was the first house right behind the Moulton house on East Front Street, and I got to know quite a bit about the lady and her background in her later years as she lived down there.

Mr. Newman: And she had some relation, Mrs. Lively lived

there.

CK: Yeah, Celia Lively.

Mr. Newman: She had one daughter that I recall. I understand that she lives in Kinston.

MF: That's right. Her name is Celia also. She married, if I'm not mistaken, Joe Eudy.

CK: Joe Eudy is her husband's name, that's correct. Baynard was also, it was written, I don't know whether it was ever verified or not, but one of the first women to fly in an airplane here.

MF: I want to ask Callie if he remembers when Fred Hussey was Mayor?

Mr. Newman: Oh yeah, I remember when Fred Hussey was Mayor.

MF: Do you remember what happened during that time and what years?

Mr. Newman: After Fred come out of the Marine Corps, I'd say it was in the Fifties. The last days when him and Frances Perry couldn't see eye to eye, he went up and lived around Washington, D.C. He was Congressman Barden, there's another word, but I call them "flukies."

MF: Right. I think they're Congressional aides.

Mr. Newman: Fred's good friend was, I think the man's name has gotten into a lot of trouble up in Washington, name Baker.

MF: I know who you are talking about, he is from Texas.

Mr. Newman: But anyway, his aide became more powerful

than he did up there in Washington. Getting back to Fred Hussey, he had a death you don't very seldom hear about. He was cutting the grass one afternoon and something bit him, and he didn't live but just a few hours.

MF: Oh, what a shame.

CK: Callie, you remember the "Big Apple?"

Mr. Newman: Yeah. The day I got out of the Army, February 13, 1946, I had read a note they were going to try Roderick Davenport in court downtown that day. It must of been the 14th because I was discharged on Camp Gordon, Augusta, Georgia, must of been on the 14th when I got home. Everybody was going to the courthouse to hear about the trial.

CK: What did you learn about the "Big Apple?" What was the "Big Apple" all about?

Mr. Newman: About interest. I tell you somebody who made a lot of money and he just died, Dr. Sherman Lewis. He'd go down and get his fifty dollars every Monday morning and he gave Roderick \$500.

CK: But he'd leave his \$500 in there all the time.

Mr. Newman: And here's a pretty good one. A feller around New Bern called Jimmy Whitcomb, "Twistneck", ran a meat market and later went to work at Cherry Point. He was making money. So, Jimmy came home from Cherry Point one night and heard that they were going to raid Roderick and they were going to go out of business. So, Jimmy went by his house and says, "Roderick, I'd like to get my money", and Roderick said,

"Well, I'm sick here in bed but come on in or come get your money." So, we turned the bed down and it had these bushel baskets of money. They pulled them out from under the bed and found bushel baskets full of all kind of money. He says, "Go ahead and take what belongs to you and push them back up under the bed." So, Jimmy went and got this money and got to the front door and said, "Roderick, you're so honest and everything, I think I'll put my money back in." So, he put his money back in, and the next day Jimmy came home from Cherry Point, Roderick Davenport had gone broke. That worried Jimmy Whitcomb! You'd had to know Jimmy to know about this!

MF: Was this gambling?

Mr. Newman: No, it was money supposed to be loaning it out.

CK: It was sort of a number's racket or sort of a chain letter like thing. Of course, he would loan this money out, Mr. Davenport, he would loan the money out at tremendous interest, and of course there were plenty of people who wanted money. Well, he would hold the interest right then. Say, if they wanted a hundred dollars and the interest was twenty dollars, he would give them eighty dollars. I don't know that it was actually illegal at the time, whether there were any kind of laws on the books that would prohibit gouging interest like that or not. He was eventually convicted and served a little time. What Callie mentioned about the bushel baskets under the bed full of money was fact that was not

fiction. They operated to some extent out of the old New Bernian Hotel.

Mr. Newman: Also, I've operated out of across from Joe Anderson's Drug Store and across from the fire house. There was a gentleman in New Bern named Morris Bray. A lot of people back in those days, your daddy and lot more of them, would hang around the Fire House. They had one of his offices across the street from the fire house. There was boy around New Bern named Red Smith and Red had a little ole dog just about this big. Red was trying to talk Morris into putting some money in the business. Red was one of the hustlers for him. So, he took a hundred dollar bill out and threw it down on the sidewalk there, and that little dog ate that hundred dollar bill up, and Morris Bray liked to had a heart attack right there!

MF: Well, I would too. Let me get back to the "Big Apple." Was it called the "Big Apple" because the money was kept in bushel basket that you would keep apples in?

CK: Yes, it become a rather large operation.

Mr. Newman: New Bern was not the only town now that made this man ran. He had a place in Goldsboro, had a place in Kinston.

MF: Oh, he was big time?

CK: He was big time, big money. Couldn't and wouldn't put it in the bank. Couldn't put it in the bank. He had to have money available all the time to loan and also money to pay off the investors their interest every week.

Mr. Newman: Dr. Sherman Lewis as I know, I've heard that he made more money out of New Bern than anybody else. He got in on the ground floor.

CK: It was a big operation.

MF: When did this take place?

Mr. Newman: During the late part of the war. I'm talking about World War II now. Getting back to the banks in 1929. Mr. Goldman he made a deposit in one of the banks up town there. I think one across from the Episcopal Church, I don't know what the name of it was, and he begged the man to let him in after one o'clock, the bank closed at one o'clock back in those days. He begged the man to let him in so he could make a deposit. He made a deposit, went back home, next morning Mr. Goldman found out the bank went broke during the night. He went up there and knocked on the door, banged on the door and started shouting, "I know my money is in there cause I gave it to you yesterday!"

CK: Callie, a lot of characters back then, like we all like to refer to them, and you've mentioned one. There was another one that carried the reputation as being quite a character who I knew as Brake Dixon.

Mr. Newman: Brake Dixon, he worked for the city too at one time when they put the diesel plant in. He worked also at Cherry Point I believe, I'm not sure.

CK: The reason I asked you about him, I've heard this story told many a time, that he ran for public office.

Mr. Newman: Alderman of the fifth ward.

CK: As I recall, he only got one vote, that's the story, which was obviously was his own. Even his wife didn't vote for him. The story goes that he was seen the next morning walking down the sidewalk downtown and supposedly had a gun in a holster hung on each side and somebody saw him coming down the street with these guns on and asked him, "Man, what in the world are you doing out here with them guns on you like this?"

Of course, you again, like Callie said, you had to know Jim Whitcomb to really appreciate the story, but you had to know Brake Dixon to really know how he reacted and responded. I knew him personally myself. Brake's answer was "Anybody that doesn't have any more friends than I do has to go protected."

(Laughter)

Mr. Newman: We had two other characters in New Bern, real characters! One of them was Kid Holman who ran a newspaper called The New Bern Tribune, and Harlow Waldrop worked for him. Pardon my expression Marea, but Harlow put an ad in the paper "Get a lot while you are young."

CK: I've seen the ad. His motto in his ad was "Get a lot while you are young." Of course, his wife ran the Green Door restaurant. Do you remember the Green Door restaurant?

MF: I certainly do.

Mr. Newman: Very nice place to eat. Very tasty food.

CK: It surely was. That was true home cooking.

Mr. Newman: Mrs. Simons ran a good eating place.

CK: She certainly did down on South Front Street.

Mr. Newman: You had to stand in line on Sunday to get in

the door.

CK: And the Brays.

Mr. Newman: They ran a boarding house.

CK: On Craven Street.

Mr. Newman: The Midyettes ran a Boarding House. There was an Episcopal Rectory there and then the Midyettes, a great big high house. There was a filling station on the corner. There was another character right next to it who ran a filling station right on the corner of Broad and Craven named Nichols. He would stay on the front of his place, Nichols liked a toddy like a lot of us did, and see these people coming home with a bag of groceries, and Nick would always say, "Now, look at that poor soul. Got all those groceries and don't have a bottle of whiskey!"

CK: Now, Garrison Farrow?

Mr. Newman: He lived in that Episcopal Rectory. He lived right across from Jack Hellinger.

CK: The reason I know about the Brays.

Mr. Newman: They're on Pollock Street.

CK: I didn't room there, I roomed with Mrs. Joseph Rhem.

Mr. Newman: Next to Davis's Drug Store.

CK: Yeah. I roomed there, but a lot of times I ate around at the Brays until Mrs. Rhem adopted me. Mrs. Rhem and her cook, Hattie, fed me just about regularly two meals a day.

MF: The Brays were Mary Mullineaux's mother and father. That was Fred and Dora Bray.

Mr. Newman: That's right. Mrs. Bray was Mary

Mullineaux's mother.

MF: Their house, was as I remember it, next to Owen G. Dunn. When you were talking about the Midyettes having a boarding house, which Midyettes?

Mr. Newman: Charlie Midyettes' momma and daddy. Robena Midyette's mother.

MF: Charlie and Robena?

Mr. Newman: Are brother and sister, and there is another one.

CK: All I know is the Brays can put out one of the best breakfast. Boy, the sausage, the ham, the bacon, the eggs, and biscuits! Have some more, have some more!

Mr. Newman: You lived there when Zeno lived there?

CK: No, I never lived with them.

Mr. Newman: I mean, not the Brays, I mean with Mrs. Rhem when Zeno Wooten lived there, B. G. Hines, and a fellow named White from Selma.

CK: B. G. had left when I went there.

Mr. Newman: How about Tom Pickford?

CK: Tom was there. Tom was still in service. He got out of service shortly after I did. I got out in 1944 and Tom came back very shortly after then. Then, I don't know where Tom went from there. Tom stayed there a while and then he moved out.

Mr. Newman: He lived with his aunt for a long time.

CK: With Mrs. Henderson?

Mr. Newman: Yeah.

CK: I know he moved over to the DeGraffenreid with her and been there a long time.

MF: Yeah, he did. He lived with Mrs. Henderson on Lucerne Way.

Mr. Newman: He died out there.

CK: He's from Pollocksville.

Mr. Newman: His daddy ran a pool room in Kinston. He never hung around Kinston he always hung around New Bern.

MF: Well, anything else about politics you would like to tell us, Callie?

Mr. Newman: No. Politics in the Thirties are different from politics today.

MF: You think they are more honest today?

Mr. Newman: Oh yes. They're much more honest cause you can't get to the people, and the poll holders are much stricter.

CK: Yeah. The laws are tighter. I've seen how some of the elections were controlled back years ago.

Mr. Newman: My cousin, Billy Lansche, he was running for Judge of Recorder's Court. We went to bed that night and he was twenty-four votes ahead. He was running against Shorty Lancaster. Well, at that time Harlow had twenty-five votes, and Harlow didn't come in until the next morning, and Shorty Lancaster got all twenty-five votes. Shorty was from Vanceboro. Kenneth Jones married his widow.

MF: Right, married his widow, Sarah.

CK: Shorty had some of his surrogates down in Harlow

doing a little foot work for him.

MF: Anything else you would like to tell us before we conclude our interview?

Mr. Newman: No, not a thing.

CK: He'll be thinking of many things later.

Mr. Newman: There was a man lived in Moonshine Alley and I've asked people, and he was a black man, and he dressed in white clothes, and they'd call him "Prophet".

CK: The street was named Moonshine Alley.

Mr. Newman: Now today the street is named Princess.

CK: Right there by the Ramada Inn, the Days Inn now.

Mr. Newman: End Street was End Street for many, many years, and one day I looked up there and it was First Street.

CK: When I came to New Bern, the city limits on Broad Street was at End Street. The city limit sign was right there. DeGraffenreid was not in the city at that time, Ghent was.

Mr. Newman: At the corner of 6th Street and Rhem Avenue for many a many a year was city limits.

CK: That's correct. Then the next move the city limits went to Horton Purser, took in Horton Purser's house. That was the end of it on Broad Street then at that time.

Mr. Newman: I was reading in that book there, saying something about eating places. We had three of them in New Bern as I recall. A bunch of girls ran one over in Bridgeton.

I'm talking about drive-in restaurants, one over in Bridgeton, and there was one over in James City.

MF: In James City, wasn't it called the Wiggly Pig?

Mr. Newman: Something like that. Then there was one on Neuse Boulevard where later on Floyd Paul ran a garage. That was the only drive-ins we had back in those days.

CK: It was called the Light House Inn. It was a light house.

MF: Well, Mr. Newman, we certainly do thank you.

Mr. Newman: When'd you start calling me Mister?

MF: Well, I've called you Callie all my life, haven't I? But now, we are suppose to be nice and formal. I do want to thank you for Charlie, for me, for Memories of New Bern for participating in our oral history program. We enjoyed it!

Mr. Newman: I'll tell you one more thing. My cousin, he paved the first streets in New Bern, Pollock Street with brick in 1910 when he was Mayor. They had some money left over and they wanted to put a fish pond in his yard, and he wouldn't let them do it because they said it was private. So, they put the fish pond out in the middle of the street right between the railroad track and the street car track.

CK: That's the Pollock, Queen, and Norwood Streets.

MF: I know exactly where it is, across from what was Tony's Drug Store, and I remember the fish pond.

CK: And Askew's Hardware. It was beautiful.

Mr. Newman: Anyway, the fish pond today is in the lower end of the cemetery. I don't know if the same goldfish is in there.

MF: Well, some of them are mighty big, it might be!

Well, Callie, thank you so much. We do appreciate it. (This interview was taped on the 2nd of June, 1992.)

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