

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

ERNEST LINWOOD BENDER, JR.

INTERVIEW 1017

This is Dr. Joseph Patterson representing the Memories of New Bern Committee. My number is 1000. I am interviewing Ernest L. Bender, Jr. Mr. Bender lives at 20 Batts Hill Road in Olde Towne in New Bern.

The interview is being conducted in Pollocksville, North Carolina in his office. The number of the interview is 1017. The date is November 4, 1992.

DR. PATTERSON: We can just sit back and relax and have a nice talk. Before we do much of anything else, I wish you would tell us about this building we are sitting in right here on the Trent River in Pollocksville.

MR. BENDER: This was originally the post office building in Pollocksville. It was located on Main Street which is now US 17. I don't think buildings had an address back in those days. This was a post office and it was located next to the house where my mother and father lived. They moved back to Pollocksville in 1917. My grandfather was Post Master. He moved the post office into his country store which was the store next door to this building and bought this building for twenty-five dollars. When my father came back to Pollocksville to practice medicine, this became his office. He practiced here from 1917 until 1923 when he moved to Trenton and started a practice in Trenton. The building was vacated. I don't remember dates, but the building was put to various uses. Then an uncle of mine, John D. Jenkins, and my Aunt Virginia, one of my father's sisters, when he started in business, they got married and they turned this into a little restaurant. He had a pool table in here and my aunt

made sandwiches. They had a little twenty-five cent pool table in here. It was used for that purpose for a while. They, ultimately, founded Jenkins Gas Company. They moved on from this building. After that, someone lived here for a while, and then it was just used for storage. It was full of old memorabilia from my granddaddy's store, which was next door two doors down from this building. It just sat there for years and years until Catherine and I decided to reclaim it. We moved it from Main Street where it was and moved it up here to its present location.

DR. PATTERSON: What year was that?

MR. BENDER: That was 1974.

DR. PATTERSON: I think I visited your father in this office.

MR. BENDER: Not in this office. When we moved it up here, we did that to have a place to stay. My father had retired from practicing in New Bern and moved into the little house next door. So when we would come to visit him, it was a small house and we didn't stay with him. We had two boys. So when we moved the office up here, we didn't restore it. We just converted it into a small place where we could come and stay. The bed there is a pull down bed like a Murphy bed and we have two bunks in the back and a bathroom. So when we came down to visit my father, we had a place to come down and visit and this is where we would stay. When he moved out here, he moved out here to retire. Then, people started coming to see him. He'd been a pediatrician for thirty-four years in New Bern. When he moved here he said two things; number one, when he retired, he would never have

a telephone in his house. He never intended to answer another telephone as long as he lived and he didn't. And that he would never make house calls anymore, which he had done all his medical career. But people would come by and take him to their house. That's the only way that he would make house calls. He moved out here in the late fifties (1959).

DR. PATTERSON: You have made this building into pretty much a museum.

MR. BENDER: Yes, a family museum.

DR. PATTERSON: A family museum with a lot of your father's memorabilia in here. I started this thing backwards deliberately just to set the setting here by the Trent River in Pollocksville where it's quiet and peaceful and beautiful. Let's then begin with your family. How about telling me your full name, your birth date, who your parents were, and about your family.

MR. BENDER: My name is Ernest Linwood Bender, Jr. My father was one of six children. He was born in 1892. He was the oldest child of my grandfather who was Thaddeus Bender and my grandmother Virginia Kilpatrick. There was a sister of his named Ruth. She died when she was three years old. I think she was the next in line in age behind my father. The next child was his brother, my Uncle Robert. He was eight years younger than my father. Then there was Walker and Alpheus and Virginia and Annis and they were all his brothers and sisters. He was considerably older than the rest of them. In fact, he had graduated from medical school when his youngest sister was born. My Aunt Virginia, Virginia Jenkins, is the only one of that generation

who is still living. She still lives here in Pollocksville.

DR. PATTERSON: What year were you born, Ernest?

MR. BENDER: 1923.

DR. PATTERSON: Where?

MR. BENDER: I was born in New Bern in St. Luke's Hospital July 21, 1923. My parents were living in Trenton, but I was born in St. Luke's Hospital in New Bern. Dr. Robert DuVal Jones delivered me. The nurse in attendance was a Miss Thorpe. We lived in Trenton two years. It was while we were living in Trenton that my father went to Washington University and Barnes Hospital in St. Louis to do graduate work and then specialize in pediatrics.

DR. PATTERSON: Where had he been before?

MR. BENDER: Where did he practice?

DR. PATTERSON: Where did he get his medical education?

MR. BENDER: He was a member of the class of 1913 at UNC. At that time, as I understand it, UNC had only two years of medicine. There were some interesting stories he used to tell me about when he was at Carolina. He got a degree from the University of North Carolina and then went to the Medical College of Virginia which is where he got his MD degree. That was in 1916. After that, he did his internship and residency at Grace Hospital in Richmond, Virginia and met my mother. Actually, he was giving the anesthetic for her appendectomy. She always said the first person she saw when she came out of her anesthetic was my father. They were married in Richmond.

DR. PATTERSON: What was her name?

MR. BENDER: Her name was Mary Epps Strother. She and all her family are from Virginia. After they were married, they moved to Roanoke, Virginia. He was employed by the Norfolk and Western railroad.

He stayed there only a few months as I understand it. He was late coming to work one day for some reason. He said the person he reported to admonished him for being late and he immediately submitted his resignation. (laughter) That was the end of his career as a railroad doctor. He had seen an advertisement in the newspaper for a doctor in Buffalo City, North Carolina. So he and my mother left Roanoke and went to Buffalo City. I think he said he paid one hundred dollars for a horse, a mule, and the buggy and all the medical instruments from the old doctor who was leaving Buffalo City. Buffalo City was nothing but a lumber camp.

DR. PATTERSON: Where was this?

MR.

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NDER: It's in Dare County. For years it actually had a little sign that said it's between Columbia, North Carolina and Mann's Harbour.

Back in that way. Stumpy Point isn't too far from there. My mother and father used to talk about it a lot, when they went there. They had to get there by boat. They refer to it as an island. Actually, it is not an island but the only way you could reach it was by boat.

The Dare Lumber Company is who he worked for. My mother used to tell about the first time that he went on a labor case there. As I say, it was a lumber camp. They had a furnished house. They turned in all of their money to a commissary and used what was referred to as

"pluck", which was little wooden certificates were used by the Dare Lumber Company to buy your groceries or whatever your needs were. Daddy said that on Saturday nights it was very much like you would vision the wild west to be. There would be a lot of drinking and some shooting. It was pretty wild over there because it was isolated. He said he always carried a gun with him everywhere he went. My mother used to tell, and he would too, of one of the first labor cases he went on. Some fellow came to pick him up with a little rail hand cart where they would pump, you know, the cart down the little tracks that they had done where they would haul lumber or logs out. This fellow was inebriated. He was drunk. Daddy said he was pretty well oiled up with alcohol. He took him to his little house. My father had gotten the instruments, as I say, he bought instruments from this other doctor who had left there. It was a forceps delivery and he was having a difficult time with the delivery. The future father was drinking constantly while this was going on and daddy said the first time he ever heard this term, this fellow came in with an axe and told him that he was "mommikin" his wife. Daddy said that's the first time he'd ever heard that word. The guy was pretty well drunk, so my father took his .32 pistol out and backed the fellow in the corner and made him sit down. He gave the pistol to my mother and told my mother, "If he moves, shoot him." That's the circumstances under which he delivered this baby. He said as soon as the baby was delivered, the wife was all right, the father said, "Well, let's all have a drink." It was fine then. (laughter) But that was the kind of practice he

was doing over there. His father wrote him to persuade him to come back and actually told him that if he would come back to Pollocksville to practice, he would have an office for him. This little building that we're talking about was the office that he provided for my father.

So, my mother & father came back here to Pollocksville. It was the year that Albemarle Sound was frozen over. He said it was completely frozen over. The way you got to Buffalo City (I've actually been back there) was up Mill Tail Creek out to the Albemarle Sound and then across the Alligator River up towards Elizabeth City. That's the way they got out. He understood that they were down to one barrel of flour at Buffalo City before they finally got some boats in there. So, that's the way he wound up in Pollocksville and practicing here.

DR. PATTERSON: Ernest, where did you go to school?

MR. BENDER: I went to New Bern High. We moved from Trenton to New Bern when I was two years old, so I grew up in New Bern.

DR. PATTERSON: Where did you live in New Bern?

MR. BENDER: We moved first of all to Rhem Avenue and rented a house. I don't remember the number, but the house is still there.

I believe it's the house that Tony Libbus eventually lived in. From there, my father bought a house on 202 Spencer Avenue. That house is still there. We lived there until the banks closed.

DR. PATTERSON: '29, '30?

MR. BENDER: I remember my father coming home from the office one day. His office was in the Elk's Temple building on the fourth floor. Whoever the man is that ran the elevator, I think his name

was Jimmy, that told him, said, "Dr. Bender, did you get you money out the banks?" My father said, "What do you mean, get it out the banks?" He said, "Well, they are all closed." Daddy said he found out that he didn't have any money. Anyway, they lost that house. Then the Morris Plan Banks, and I've never really understood what the Morris Plan Banks system was, but anyway, through that and getting a small loan from one of his uncles who was a dentist, he was able to buy the house at, there was a 711 Spencer Avenue which was at the other end of Ghent. That's where I grew up. Most of my time, I remember living there.

DR. PATTERSON: You went to Ghent?

MR. BENDER: I went to Ghent School. Miss Eleanor Marshall was the Principal. I left Ghent School and went down to Central High where we went to the seventh grade. Miss Winslow, I believe was a teacher there.

DR. PATTERSON: Lanta Winslow.

MR. BENDER: Then I went to New Bern High School, Central High School, across from the Masonic Theater and graduated from high school, in 1940.

DR. PATTERSON: Who were some of your friends in those years?

MR. BENDER: Joe Anderson, Joe Jr., was one of my closest friends in those years. Norfleet Gibbs, Harold Maxwell, Jr., they lived across the street from us in Ghent. And Billy Lancaster, Claude Dillon Lancaster; how he ever got the name Billy, I don't know, but Billy Lancaster and Billy Lowery. They're the ones that come to mind.

DR. PATTERSON: You graduated from New Bern High School?

MR. BENDER: Yes.

DR. PATTERSON: And then went to State?

MR. BENDER: No. Then I went to St. Christopher's. We had eleven grades in New Bern High School at that time, so I went to St. Christopher's School in Richmond to have the twelfth grade, to have one more grade. I found out that the academic competition at St. Christopher's was entirely different than it was in New Bern High School. I wound up being put back two grades when I went to St. Christopher's. Anyway, I finished one year at St. Christopher's. That was in 1941. The war started. I told my parents that if I were to get into college, I ought to start now. Since I'd graduated from high school, why, no problem. That's when I transferred and left St. Christopher's and went to NC State in the middle of the year. I had no idea, really, what I wanted to do. Mother thought textile engineering would be a good course, so I started in textile school at State. I was a sophomore and the war came on. Like many other people (my contemporaries) we all wanted to join and get in the military. Bill Boylan was a good friend of mine. Bill and I decided we ought to come home and see if we could join up. I had to get permission from my parents. I wasn't old enough to join. I had to get permission to enlist. So we came home one weekend. My mother had been ill for a long time. She had cancer. Anyway, to make a long story short, my parents wouldn't give me permission to enlist. So I went back to State. I was a sophomore. Then I came back and went to work for Nello

Teer when they were building Cherry Point. It was just under construction at the time. Pat Mullineaux and Bill Boylan, the three of us I can remember, we went to work at Cherry Point as steam fitter's helpers. I had no more idea what a steam fitter's helper was. (laughter)

We worked with some contractors (all of them were from New York), steam fitters and boiler makers. That in itself was an education working with those people. I was working there when I finally got my draft notice and then went to Fort Bragg and went in as a Private and ultimately was able to get into aviation cadets and graduated as a Bombardier in Victorville, California as a Second Lieutenant.

DR. PATTERSON: I know Victorville.

MR. BENDER: In the desert. That was quite a place. The experience at Cherry Point was interesting to me personally. They were pretty rough. They used to sit around, some of the people there at work, steam fitters and boiler makers, and we'd sit around at lunch and they would bemoan the fact that they didn't have prohibition. If prohibition just came back and then they could quit work and go back to what they were doing before. There was one man, a boiler maker who lived in New Bern until he died, and he used to talk about running some speak easies in New York and he had encroached on someone else's territory and he was being taken for the proverbial "last ride." He wrestled a pistol away from the people that were taking him to dump him in the river, I suppose, and he shot and killed one of them and got away.

He was incarcerated in Sing Sing and that's where he learned the boiler making trade; at least, he used to work with some of the trade. I

wouldn't give anything for the experience. I worked for a fellow named Bill Brownstone who was a steam fitter. He was from the Chelsea district of Brooklyn. I was "ownie" to him. He said he knew Legs Diamond when he was growing up. Before I left, he moved in our house. We were renting rooms. Daddy and mother rented some rooms. Because at that time as you may remember, the Marines were coming in and everybody was asked to please try to help the war effort by renting rooms if you had any spare rooms. So, Bill Brownstone moved in a room that we had in the house and we became real good friends. He taught me an awful lot about growing up. I never will forget we were working one time eighty feet up on a twelve inch eye beam hanging headers with great big pipes.

I didn't know anything about it, but I had a spud wrench, which is a sharp pointed wrench at one end. You tighten the flanges with bolts and you're supposed to go x-ed across and I didn't know and I went around in a circle and cracked it. Bill shook me. He was a great big guy. We were standing up there and he grabbed my coat and was shaking me just like a dog almost and we're eighty feet above. I told him "You can't do this", and he said, "If you're looking for sympathy I can tell you where to find it - in the dictionary." (laughter) He said that's the only place you should ever look for sympathy. But we became great friends and it was a real experience working with Bill. He's dead now. I corresponded with him for years.

DR. PATTERSON: You were down there when Cherry Point was just being built.

MR. BENDER: Oh yes. Where we worked was in the central heating

plant and they were just building it.

DR. PATTERSON: What was the whole area like then?

MR. BENDER: The runways were in. My recollection of the whole base is very limited because we just went to work and I went to the central heating plant which was under construction and we didn't tour around the whole base. But the runways were in and they were flying planes off there. As I recall, the Army had the responsibility of patrolling the coastal areas of the United States. I subsequently read that there was a controversy about really who had responsibility for protecting the coast of the United States whether it was Army or the Marines or the Navy or whether it was the Coast Guard. But at that time, the Army was flying Lockheed Hudsons as I recall and they were patrolling the coast. I remember the Trent Pines Club was quite the place to go in those days. I think Tyrone Power was stationed down at Cherry Point. But the base itself, there was very little there except the runways. I don't remember a lot of barracks or buildings. We were just focusing on that one building.

DR. PATTERSON: After you left Victorville and became a Bombardier, you were in the Air Force or the Army?

MR. BENDER: It was the Army Air Corps. There was no separate Air Force.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you stay in the Air Corps for some time?

MR. BENDER: I graduated from Victorville as a Bombardier and then came home on delay in route, which was a certain period of leave. Then from there, I transferred to Lincoln, Nebraska which is where

crews were assembled, where you got your air crews together. That was just a waiting period until they assembled different crews where you got an assignment. Our crew was pulled together. We went from there to Sioux City, Iowa for operational training unit, OTU, which is where you actually begin to function as a crew and we flew B17's there. I was in Class 44B in cadets. So I went through operational training unit. We were all ready to ship out. Then, there was a delay and our crews were broken up and I was told that the bombardiers were going through the second time as instructors for new people that were coming in. So I went through OTU twice. The second time as an instructor. It was shortly after that, that the war ended in Europe.

So, that accounted for the delay. From there, they shipped me and a whole bunch of us down to San Marcos, Texas and started us going through navigation school to get on B29's to head for the Pacific.

I think I had finished that navigation school and we were ready to be assigned to B29's when the war ended in Japan. So, I was probably the best trained non-combatant you could ever imagine. (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Then did you go to finish at State?

MR. BENDER: I went back to State and finished another year. Then I got to thinking that I'd like to go to medical school. My father had never encouraged me one way or another to med school. He said if I wanted to be a doctor I should decide first if I wanted to live a life of sacrifice for others. I grew up in New Bern, as perhaps you did, as being "little doc." I can remember going to the barber shop under the Elk's Temple. Mr. Barfield, the Elk's Temple barber

shop, Mr. Barfield used to come down with his homburg hat on. He was probably the most dapper, well dressed man in New Bern I guess. He seemed to be. I grew up being "little doc." People would say, "You gonna be a doctor like your father?" I, in an immature way, said that's the last thing I want to be!; as a sort of rebellious act. But when I went back and finished the second year at State, then I thought, well, maybe I ought to go. I sort of got the desire to do that. I had had a ruptured disk and had surgery on it at Duke. I spent my convalescence time, through some permission I got, going and watching surgery and I thought I will get into med school. At the time, under the GI Bill, you had all kinds of priorities to get into college. But if you wanted to transfer, then you had to get on a list for it. So I went over to Duke and I took a whole bunch of test and then they said it would be about six to eight months before you can get in, which seemed to me at that time like a life time. I came home after I took all the qualifying test over at Duke. I came back and started working for what was then the Federal Security Agency. We were in malaria control.

DR. PATTERSON: This was in New Bern?

MR. BENDER: In New Bern, right. Doing malaria control work. If you think about it in today's environment, what they were doing was draining marshes. A fellow named Jack White, who may still be in New Bern, was who I worked for. My job was, we had a five county area, was to go around and persuade people to let us come in and spray DDT in their barns and outhouses for malaria control. Now, I think

we had a solution of DDT and ethylene glycol I believe is what made this solution. So we went all around spraying DDT in barns and outhouses. Some people would even try to persuade some of our crews in some very rural areas, to spray houses. I'll say one thing, mosquitoes, they didn't have a problem with it. That was before DDT got its bad reputation. So I was doing that. One day I went to have lunch with my father and a detail man, a medical representative, was in the office and we had lunch together. He told me, "Why don't you investigate going to work for a pharmaceutical company?" Since I was just sitting around waiting to get in med school, I applied to A. H. Robins Company. I think I was the twenty-second person hired. They had twenty-two representatives. I started to work for them with the idea that that would be rather temporary and then I would go to med school. Well, obviously, I never went back. I started working for them and moved down to Georgia & Florida. I really loved what I was doing, calling on doctors, drug stores, and hospitals. Then I married Catherine Brinson. I had one unusual experience and this was not too long after the war. A lot of young doctors were just starting practice.

In fact, some of them were very young. I called on a few doctors that were growing mustaches so that they could gain a certain amount of feeling of seniority with their patients because they were so young.

One doctor I used to call on, he told me that if I would go to the University of Georgia, he would pay my way if I'd come back and practice with him. I went home that weekend. Katherine and I were living in Albany, Georgia, pronounced "All Benny". We were living there. I've

never spent a more agonizing weekend in my life trying to decide what to do. I finally decided number one; I wasn't a very good student to begin with, and number two; I liked the job we were doing and I was doing well. So, I said no and stayed on with the company.

DR. PATTERSON: You became very successful with that company.

MR. BENDER: Yes. We moved around a lot. Catherine and I have lived in fifteen different houses. We moved nine times the first seven years we were married, being transferred around and moving from one area to the other. Then I was promoted to division manager in New England and then ultimately was a senior vice-president. Most of my career in Richmond after I moved to the headquarters was spent trying to locate companies for our company to buy. I traveled all over a lot of the world and made contacts. It was a fascinating job to walk in a completely unstructured environment and calling on people to try to persuade them to sell their company to our company. That's what I did until I retired.

DR. PATTERSON: That's a pretty fascinating career. Ernest, let's get you back in New Bern with your father. I wish you'd tell me about your father and what his practice was like in New Bern, what he did, his associates, what medicine was like as you remember it growing up with your father. Just what do you remember about all that?

MR. BENDER: Without trying to put anything in chronological order, there's some of the things that I recall. One thing that happened that was rather traumatic for me as a young boy, a good friend of mine whose name was Osala Towe. They lived out on Spencer Avenue. She

had chicken pox as I recall and subsequently died. I've often wondered, this is before anybody knew anything about Reyes syndrome, I've often wondered if that had anything to do with it. My father, as I say, was a pediatrician and made house calls day and night. There was never any thought that he would turn down anybody to make a house call. It was during the Depression. He stayed in the office on Saturdays all day long without making any calls. My mother would take the car, we had one car, and I would go with her frequently to go collecting in the country. We would travel all around in Jones in the county and I can't remember anybody ever paying with money. But we had hams.

At one time, we had twenty-some hams in the basement. They would pay with hams, irish potatoes. One of my jobs was to keep the potatoes turned over to keep them from sprouting. Money was very scarce to say the least. I believe my daddy was the only person in New Bern, that did blood transfusions. That was direct from donor to recipient.

He used to match blood. I don't know what they matched for in those days, but he had to match blood. He had a little lab in the back of his office. I can remember going up sometimes in his office and cranking a hand centrifuge while he was matching blood to do a blood transfusion.

Every so often he'd have a difficulty trying to find a donor that would match. In the Athens Theater I can remember he would run, during the preliminaries to the feature, he'd run a little sign, notice, if anybody would like to donate blood for a little child and so forth, please come call Dr. Bender. That's the way he used to advertise for donors occasionally.

DR. PATTERSON: He would do the transfusions in his office?

MR. BENDER: No, in the hospital. St. Luke's Hospital is where all of them were done. He also used to teach nurses. He was instructing nurses. I remember one of the nurses, maybe the head nurse, a Miss Sledge.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. She was a superintendent of nurses.

MR. BENDER: He used to work with her in instructing nurses I remember.

DR. PATTERSON: They had a nurses training school there.

MR. BENDER: Yes. He would serve in pediatrics. One of the things that I can recall was that; of course, this is before the days before antibiotics, one example that he has told me about that I've always thought of as a rather graphic example in making a distinction between the art and the science of medicine; he had a patient one time that was brought to him, a little girl, from down near Sea Level I think it was, who was desperately ill. There was no doubt that the little girl, he said she was really in desperate shape. They'd taken her to see a couple of doctors. I don't know who it was. They had made no diagnosis. Daddy said that he was examining the little girl and talking to the parents and he said all of a sudden it occurred to him exactly what was wrong with the little girl. He said he was so excited because it was the one thing that you could actually do something about.

He said she had clinical scurvy. It was just classic. He'd never seen a case. I mean in medical school, how much scurvy do you see?

So he told the parents, "Here's what I want you to do. I want you

to go down to the grocery store and buy two dozen oranges and I want you to squeeze the oranges and give this little girl orange juice."

I have forgotten exactly how frequent. He said as he was observing the parents, he noticed that this wasn't getting through to them at all because they knew they had a very sick little girl and here's a doctor going to tell them to give her oranges. Daddy said he immediately told them, "Now, that's not all. I'm gonna write you a prescription and this medicine with the prescription in the orange juice is what's gonna work." He wrote her a prescription for a elixer of lactated pepsin, which is a placebo. They accepted that and little girl recovered. He said that he made quite a reputation for himself down east with being some sort of miracle doctor with this magic medicine that worked along with oranges.

DR. PATTERSON: What was your father's office like?

MR. BENDER: He had one reception room, a treatment room with a desk in the treatment room as I recall, and a little lab back behind it. I think it was just two rooms as I recall.

DR. PATTERSON: Did he treat black patients?

MR. BENDER: All. Anybody.

DR. PATTERSON: They all used the same reception room?

MR. BENDER: Everybody used the same thing. I don't ever remember any distinction one way or another. But he just had one room and two offices.

DR. PATTERSON: Who were some of your father's physician associates?

MR. BENDER: There was Dr. Patterson, Dr. Jones, Dr. Gibbs, Dr. Ford. Dr. Ford was a public health officer. Dr. Barker, Dr. Wadsworth, Dr. Pollock, Dr. Richard Duffy. As I recall when we moved to New Bern, there were only eight doctors here.

DR. PATTERSON: Dr. Latham?

MR. BENDER: Dr. Joe Latham. He had an office across the street. In the early days, they're the main doctors that I remember. They used to have county medical meetings in different physician's houses. I can remember some of the meetings that we had at my parent's house out on Spencer Avenue. Occasionally some doctor would come from another county. I can remember on a couple occasions a Dr. Tayloe from over in Washington would come over. They would have medical meetings around in various houses. Tony Libbus who at that time had a drug store in New Bern, for entertainment, I know at one time at my father's house, he made arrangements for a pinball machine to be in the living room. After they read the medical papers, they would have some libation which were supplied by one of the doctors. I can't remember who it was, but one of the doctors seemed to have a good source of liquid refreshments. I think they had monthly medical meetings in the Craven County Medical Society.

DR. PATTERSON: Your father was perhaps the first or certainly one of the earliest specialists to come to New Bern.

MR. BENDER: I think he was the only pediatrician. I'm pretty sure he was the first pediatrician to come to New Bern. He was the only pediatrician anywhere in the area as I recall. There was a Dr.

Sidbury who had a pediatric hospital. The building is still there down in Wilmington near Wrightsville Beach. I can remember my father referring patients and would go down occasionally to see Dr. Sidbury and take patients down there for consultation. But he's the only other pediatrician I recall anywhere around in this area.

DR. PATTERSON: Was Dr. Daniels here then?

MR. BENDER: Yes. Dr. Ralph Daniels was here. He was an ENT man. His brother, Dr. O. C. Daniels, lived in Oriental. Then later than that, Dr. Ashford, Dr. Charles Duffy and some others. But the first group that I recall I think there were about nine or ten doctors.

DR. PATTERSON: Now these other doctors were general practitioners who did pediatrics also. Was there any problem of referrals between them and your father? Was there any friction about his being there?

MR. BENDER: Not that I'm aware of, Joe. If there was, I was never aware of it. I am left with the impression that the other doctors had enough to do dealing with surgical cases, obstetrics, treating various adult diseases, that they were really happy to have somebody take care of pediatric patients. Infant feeding was a big part of my father's practice as I recall at that time. It seemed to me that maybe that was a period when breast feeding was not in vogue so to speak. Because I can remember Pablum was a big product then. Klim milk was used and lactic acid milk. A lot of his practice had to do with infant nutrition as I recall. There apparently was a lot of hookworm in those days. But I don't really recall a feeling of competition in that regard. My father used to get frustrated I know

because he said that after the advent of antibiotics and so forth, he used to talk about the fact what really did we do for people back in those days before antibiotics when there were no specific drugs as he said. I can remember he was telling me about the flu epidemic of 1918. He was practicing here in Pollocksville and in Trenton I guess it was at the time of the Spanish flu. He told me about one incident that he had. He would go to somebody's house and they would immediately tell him when you finish here go to some other house. He'd just go from one place to another. He told me about going into one little house in a very rural area somewhere and the mother and the father and the child were all dead when he got there, in 1918. He said it was very rough to practice medicine in those days. But that was general practice before he got into pediatrics.

DR. PATTERSON: In New Bern, did he have quite a busy hospital practice at St. Luke's or was most of his practice office and house calls?

MR. BENDER: He used to go to the hospital a lot, but I'm not so sure that a lot of that wasn't doing blood transfusions. My main recollection of him was house calls and office calls. He was on call twenty-four hours a day. I used to go with him sometimes just to keep him company I guess. I can remember a couple of times we went over across the river to Bridgeton and the fog was so thick coming back that we parked the car on one side and walked along across the bridge with a stick running it on the railing. We don't seem to have fog as thick as that. Another time, I remember he was making a call

somewhere in Duffyfield and was driving back home and the fog and smoke were so thick that he parked the car somewhere near Ghent School. When he finally got home, he said he got lost because he was following the sidewalks and he couldn't see. The sidewalk going into Ghent School went around the school and he thought he was headed home. He said that was the most foolish feeling he ever had when he realized here he was lost and when he finally realized where he was. It was that foggy. But we don't seem to have fog and smoke like that.

DR. PATTERSON: He had a lot of night calls, did he?

MR. BENDER: A lot of them.

DR. PATTERSON: What sort of car did he have?

MR. BENDER: The first car I remember is he had a Pontiac touring car. That's the first car I remember him having. Then, he had Studabakers after that. It seemed to me Bill Rawls with Swan-Rawls Motor Co. used to get Studabakers. But the first car I remember him having was a Pontiac. Somebody sent me a "30 Years or 40 Years Ago" article sometime ago from the Morehead newspaper. He used to go down to Morehead and practice on Wednesday afternoons, one day a week, with a Dr. Royal.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. Ben Royal.

MR. BENDER: Anyway, he would go one day a week and go down to Morehead.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you ever know young Ben Royal, about our age? He was killed in the war.

MR. BENDER: No, I don't remember him.

DR. PATTERSON: Your father was in general practice in Pollocksville and then in Trenton, is that correct?

MR. BENDER: That's correct.

DR. PATTERSON: And then he went away to get pediatric training in Richmond.

MR. BENDER: No. He went to Washington University in St. Louis, at Barnes Hospital in Washington University. That's where he got his pediatric training. When he came back from there, he moved to New Bern to practice pediatrics.

DR. PATTERSON: Tell me what you remember about Dr. R. DuVal Jones.

MR. BENDER: Well, I don't know if you want to record one of my most vivid memories of him. (laughter) He was an outspoken fellow.

Of course, I was quite young and I remember it. If you want to record this, I'll give it to you in detail my most vivid recollection of Dr. Jones. My father was a great believer in insurance. When I was about twelve years old, he took out an insurance policy on me. Mr. John Haywood Jones and he were good friends. So, I had to have a physical exam. I can remember vividly being in Dr. Jones office. As I recall in St. Luke's Hospital, his office was on the right as you went upstairs.

I think your father's office was on the left right in the front, or vice-versa.

DR. PATTERSON: Dr. Jones office was in the corner on the front and my dad's office was right next to him.

MR. BENDER: I thought his was across the hall on the corner on the front. Anyway, Dr. Jones office was on the corner in the front.

He asked me to go in the bathroom and he wanted a urine specimen. He walked in before I had completed giving him a specimen. I will never forget what he said. He said, "My god son! If I could pee like that I would give fifty dollars!" It embarrassed me. (laughter) I've never forgotten it. He said, "Damn, you could knock the tiles right off the wall, couldn't you." Anyway, I was so embarrassed I had no idea what he was talking about. I do know today what he was talking about. (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Ernest, that's a wonderful story. It certainly sounds like Dr. Jones. You remember much about my father?

MR. BENDER: I actually don't remember much about having any contact with any of the other doctors. This incidence with Dr. Jones stands out. But certainly I remember your father and my father in consultation and doing appendectomies and so forth. I certainly remember him and Dr. Gibbs. I remember all the doctors, but they were just other doctors to me pretty much when I was growing up there in New Bern.

DR. PATTERSON: When did your father and your family move from New Bern back to Pollocksville?

MR. BENDER: My father retired. I left New Bern in 1948 and my father still practiced there. I think he moved out here in the late fifties (1959), retired from New Bern. My mother died in 1943 when I was in the service. He stayed in New Bern and then he retired and moved out here (I think it was in the late fifties or early sixties).

As I say, he moved out here to retire. At the time I was living in

New England or somewhere. I haven't actually lived in New Bern to live there consistently since shortly after World War II.

DR. PATTERSON: You said that when your dad was out here he did some general practice and people would pick him up and take him to their homes. Did he keep that up until he died?

MR. BENDER: No. He couldn't hear very well. He was 91 when he died.

DR. PATTERSON: What year was that?

MR. BENDER: That was in 1983. When he actually stopped practicing, I don't know. He said that probably the greatest service he performed out here for a long time before he "stopped practicing" was just being a good listener for people. As he put it, he figured about fifty percent of the population were neurotic and the main thing they needed was somebody to listen to without actually having to have any specific treatment. He prided himself on being a diagnostician. He liked diagnosis. He always liked to solve puzzles of any kind. Before he actually stopped seeing patients out here, he came to live with us in Richmond for a while and back and forth. He was a great believer of taking medical histories. He said that's one thing that doctors today don't seem to do. They want enough tests and then the history. He took long detailed histories and he would make a diagnosis. The era of malpractice, was coming on pretty strong. So, he would tell people that in his opinion this is what I think is your problem but he said go to New Bern and see a doctor in New Bern. He said I wouldn't treat you, but this is what I think's wrong. He would send

them to somebody in New Bern, but he would ask them to always come back and tell him what they found out. I have people out here tell me that; without understanding why he didn't want to treat anybody, said, "I go to New Bern and they do all these tests and they come back and they tell me the same thing Dr. Bender told me without doing this!"

But that was the latter days and he was gradually not practicing at all.

DR. PATTERSON: Is he buried in the Pollocksville cemetery?

MR. BENDER: No. He's buried in the cemetery in New Bern.

DR. PATTERSON: Cedar Grove?

MR. BENDER: No. Catherine and I, when we were living in Richmond or somewhere, decided that we should buy cemetery lots. My mother was buried in the new section of Cedar Grove when she died. My father didn't have a cemetery lot when she died. He was really pretty well shaken up. So we bought a lot out at Greenleaf Memorial Park, a perpetual care out towards Trent Woods. We bought a lot out there and moved my mother's grave there and that's where my father's buried.

The reasons he and my mother are buried there is because my mother used to tell my father that this is the prettiest cemetery in Pollocksville she ever saw and that she would like to be buried there.

Except, when she was living here in Pollocksville, it wasn't maintained at all and she said that she did not want to be buried where she'd have weeds growing on her grave. Well now, the cemetery is maintained pretty well, but they're not buried there.

DR. PATTERSON: Your father was held in great esteem by my father

and by me. I remember your father with great affection and my father thought the world of him.

MR. BENDER: The feeling was mutual I know. Because when my father was living out in Ghent (I was gone and my mother was dead) your father used to ride out to see him. They would sit out on the screen porch out in Ghent I know and spend afternoons. I think your father had about retired then too and they'd spend a lot of time talking. Daddy used to tell me about it.

DR. PATTERSON: Ernest, let's go back to New Bern and let me ask you about some of your memories about Ghent and New Bern. Tell me about the Ghent Casino.

MR. BENDER: It was back behind where we used to live in 202 Spencer Avenue. We just referred to it as "the old casino." My recollection of it is it was never functioning. It was just a big vacant building.

Eddie Paul lived across the street. The Menius's lived down the street. Anyway, as a young person growing up, some of my friends out there were Buzzy Menius, that's Flynn Menius. As I say, Billy Lancaster lived down the street. There was a young fellow named Orin Fagler.

I don't know where they live now. And the Paul's lived across the street. Mike Holton lived down the street. We used to go over there and play in the old casino. It was just a great big barn of a building.

It probably wasn't as big as I remembered it being. We used to go and climb around in the rafters. I remember it had big beams in the rafters. Then there were dressing rooms downstairs in the lower floor.

It was just a place for a bunch of kids to go and play and we used

to go over there and have a great time just playing around. But I never remember it functioning at all.

DR. PATTERSON: As I remember it, it was raised up high off the ground.

MR. BENDER: Yes. Under the back side there were some dressing rooms down there as I recall. But we'd just go over there and play.

Another place we used to play a lot was in the car barn. The street cars were stored on what is now I guess First Street. There's a triangle that Park Avenue, Spencer Avenue, and First Street make. Now there are houses there. But when I was growing up there, it was nothing but where they stored street cars. All the old street cars were parked in there and it was a great place to go play. I don't remember the street cars running at the time, but they were just empty cars. You can imagine what fun we'd have in the street cars pretending we were motormen.

DR. PATTERSON: Street cars had stopped functioning by that time.

MR. BENDER: I don't remember them functioning. It must have been just shortly before we moved there, but I don't remember them functioning. They were just in the old car barn. That's what we referred to it as a place to go play.

DR. PATTERSON: Where did you go swimming?

MR. BENDER: I was a member of Dr. Hand's Gang. We used to go right down at the foot of the Neuse River bridge.

DR. PATTERSON: On Johnson Street.

MR. BENDER: On Johnson Street. I remember being initiated into

Dr. Hand's Gang. If you recall, he had a little building up on stilts or something about the size of this building.

DR. PATTERSON: Over the water.

MR. BENDER: Over the water, which was a clubhouse. There was also a sliding board that went out into the water. I remember Dr. Hand when I was initiated. One of the things he had, it looked like a jigger I guess, a little cup, and it was full of red liquid. I was supposed to do exactly what he did. This could have been blood or something and he would put his finger in it and then lick it off of his finger. Well, I would do the same thing. It must have been tabasco sauce! What he was doing which I didn't observe, he would switch fingers. He would put this finger in and then lick another finger. (laughter) I remember that as part of the initiation to be part of Dr. Hand's Gang. Then it ultimately became a scout troop, Troop 50.

I guess I got to be a First Class Scout. I remember passing a merit badge. Ray Henderson was the mayor of New Bern in the old post office building. He's the one that examined us for our knot tying and so forth to pass various tests for scouts. But we used to swim there.

I swam at Crabby's a little bit but not much. You know, there were the Crabby's boys and there was Dr. Hand's Gang and they were sort of a different crowd of kids. Plus, I used to come out to Pollocksville on Sundays. Almost every Sunday we would come out here. First of all I remember coming on a little brick road and then we finally got it paved. I vaguely remember that. My grandmother lived here. There would be my father, mother and anywhere from ten to fifteen people

for a Sunday dinner, and I'd come swimming in Trent River right out here.

DR. PATTERSON: How long did it take you to drive here from New Bern?

MR. BENDER: I don't know. It was a paved road, but I don't remember. We'd go every Sunday. Routine on Sunday, my father would go to the office and he would do office work. That's when he would do the bills and keep up all his records. A lot of them I still have here. My mother and I would go to Sunday school and then sometimes daddy would meet us and we'd go to church. Sometimes, he wouldn't.

Joe Anderson and Roddy Guion and I had sort of a competition. We all went to the Episcopal church. I was baptized in the Episcopal church and grew up there and so did Roddy and Joe. We sort of had a competition, the three of us, to go to Sunday School without missing.

Sunday school was summer and winter. It wasn't just a seasonal thing then. I can remember a few times we'd go on a vacation or be going somewhere and stopping on the road somewhere in some little town so I could go to Sunday school and get a note to prove I'd been. I've got medals. I went fifteen years without missing a single Sunday.

The Sunday before I had my appendix out, I can remember Mr. George Roberts who taught there, that's Lillian's daddy, and I can't think who else, maybe Jack Bagg's father, carried me up the steps in a chair to go to Sunday school because I couldn't straighten up so I wouldn't miss. I went up so I'd at least put in an appearance and went to Sunday school and then I went back down and the next week I had my appendix

out. I don't know whether your father, or who took my appendix out.

DR. PATTERSON: Mr. Roberts was my Sunday school teacher too. Dr. Hand's Gang, what all went on in this establishment?

MR. BENDER: (laughter) I was sort of a late comer to Dr. Hand's Gang as I recall. We had meetings. It was mostly fun. We swam in the polluted river. Of course, you go right out and the river was obviously raw sewage and everything there. I don't remember any great events that we had except we'd have meetings regularly and it was just a place for us to go and have fun and swim in the river and slide down the sliding board.

DR. PATTERSON: I remember a party there one time. I belonged too. Dr. Hand put a curtain up to divide a room into two parts and he cut a small hole in this sheet which was the curtain. The girls were on one side and the boys were on the other side. The idea was to team up a boy with a girl. The girls would take turns putting their noses through this little hole and the boys on the other side would select the girls by the noses they liked. (laughter) I remember it was pretty successful.

MR. BENDER: I remember we used to have similar parties, but I don't remember a lot of activities except mostly boys. Dr. Hand, in the back of his house, he had a cable that was attached to a tree or something and it went down. It seemed like a real long backyard. We could hang on a pulley and slide down the cable and at the end of it was an old cushion out of an automobile. As I say, I used to spend a lot of time on Johnson Street even though I lived out in Ghent.

DR. PATTERSON: I remember that slide too and I've been on it many times. If you look in back of Dr. Hand's old house now, there's no backyard.

MR. BENDER: That's what threw me. Because I notice there's no backyard and I said I know I remember we used slide down this cable. Then I rode by there not too long ago and I couldn't figure out where it was.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you ever play baseball back there?

MR. BENDER: I don't remember playing baseball.

DR. PATTERSON: We used to play baseball back there against the South Front Street boys. They always beat us.

MR. BENDER: Another thing we used to do was ride the ice wagon down at Johnson Street. The ice wagon when it would come around, we would jump on the back of the ice wagon and ride around the corner and get chunks of ice. I don't know who drove the thing, but he tolerated it, but it was always, "Ya'll boys get off the ice wagon." That was a big thing to ride around on the ice wagon.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you walk from your home out in Ghent down to Johnson Street?

MR. BENDER: Most of the time. Every now and then I'd go in with my father when he went to the office. I always walked back from school. I don't ever remember riding. "Teensy" (C.W.) Hodges and one other person are the only two people I remember having an automobile in high school.

DR. PATTERSON: Did most of the young people from Ghent who were

going to high school walk back and forth?

MR. BENDER: Most everybody that I knew.

DR. PATTERSON: From Riverside too?

MR. BENDER: I assume they did. Of course, I didn't go out Riverside.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you do much sailing?

MR. BENDER: No. I don't even remember many sailboats. I remember two sailboats in New Bern. There was one episode we had with a sailboat.

I can't think whose boat it was, it seemed to me it was a rather large boat. Joe Anderson and I think it was Lillian Roberts and I believe Elizabeth Godwin, I wouldn't swear to who the girls were, we got that sailboat and sailed down the Neuse River. None of us knew much about sailing. We got across the other side of the river pretty far down and got into a heck of a storm. I mean it was a big thunder storm.

We pulled up in a little beach and sat there and rode the storm out until night. I remember our parents started wondering what had happened to us. We saw some lights and we sailed across the river. Joe was at the tiller and we came up to a beach in front of this house. I was standing up. Joe tacked the boat. I remember the boom knocked me right overboard and it was the biggest fiasco. I can't remember whose house it was, but we called and told our parents that we were safe. But I don't remember much sailing. I do remember a lot of hydroplane racing though.

DR. PATTERSON: That was on the Neuse?

MR. BENDER: No, it was in front of the Country Club. Guy Hamilton,

Jr., Jarvis Arthur, Steve Fowler (Steve was also a buddy of mine and we used to pal around), and Marshall Harvey and Charlie Kimbrell used to have hydroplane races. In fact, Charlie and his wife and Catherine and I, before we were married, went up to Solomon's Island, Maryland for a hydroplane race. That's after the war.

DR. PATTERSON: Do you remember much about the way downtown New Bern looked when you were growing up?

MR. BENDER: I remember Broad Street in particular, they weren't cobblestones, they were bricks. I've got one over here that came out of the road. I remember Broad Street with trees and where Dr. Kafer had his hospital. It was a big old pretty antebellum type home. Mr. Len Cohen had his store down on Middle Street and Duffy's drug store was across the corner. At the foot of Middle Street, boats used to come up there. My father loved raw oysters and he'd go down every year in the fall of the year and get a bushel of oysters from the boats that pulled right up at the bottom of Middle Street. Another thing that we did on Sunday nights sometime, the Gaston Hotel, of course, was on the water. Emma Duffy Blades, Mr. Blades, they lived there. We had in the Episcopal church Young People's Service League, YPSL, it was referred to. I can remember that some of us would go with Emma Duffy back to the Gaston Hotel after YPSL and dance and have parties.

DR. PATTERSON: There was a dance floor?

MR. BENDER: Well, I don't remember. It seemed to me we used to just go up in a lobby. As I recall, Gaston, upstairs there were like a bunch of lobbies sort of around. I don't remember going to

a dance floor. Maybe we'd just go up there and hang out as they say today. I can remember doing that. Then there was Crabby's. Down where my wife's father and Mr. Sawyer ran Armstrong Grocery Company took in the place where the farmer's market is now. All that was a big warehouse down there. All the waterfront was warehouses.

DR. PATTERSON: A lot of piers, wharves.

MR. BENDER: Yes.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you go to a lot of dances when you grew up? Did your crowd dance?

MR. BENDER: Yes. The dances I remember going to were all at the Women's Club mainly.

DR. PATTERSON: On Union Point?

MR. BENDER: On Union Point. We had dances there. Also in the armory there were dances. What is that, the police department now? By Kafer Park. We'd go to dances at the armory and the Women's Club in particular were the main places we went. Then there was a Beacon. That was a great place.

DR. PATTERSON: Where was that?

MR. BENDER: The Beacon was out on the old Kinston highway. Do you remember it all?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MR. BENDER: Well, that was the place to go particularly if you had a car or knew somebody that had a car. It was a drive-in, and we used to go out there and dance.

DR. PATTERSON: That was run by Mike Jowdy?

MR. BENDER: It could be. Very early, early on, New Bern did not have a radio station, but there was some connection with a radio station on the telephone. I don't remember how it worked, but on Sunday afternoons they used to have a show out there occasionally at the Beacon and it would be broadcast. I can remember some black people that would come out there that could tap dance like you wouldn't believe it. I can remember going to the Beacon occasionally. It seemed to me it was on Sunday afternoon and there would be a radio broadcast. This was before New Bern had a broadcasting station.

DR. PATTERSON: In those days, maybe a little earlier or about that time, what was it like to use a telephone? Were there operators?

MR. BENDER: Yes. In fact, my wife Catherine was a telephone operator at one time. Yeah, they had an operator. Of course, the telephones didn't look like they are now. I remember spending a lot of time on the telephone when I was dating. (laughter) But I don't remember anything particularly significant about telephones.

DR. PATTERSON: When you picked up the phone, there would be this voice who would answer you?

MR. BENDER: Yes. You'd tell them the number. The numbers were only three numbers that I recall. I've still got somewhere in my father's records our telephone number. Like, please give me 867. I still remember Catherine's number. It was Melrose 72740. That number, her sister still has, which is 637-2740. There were no prefixes.

DR. PATTERSON: Our number was 58. We had two numbers.

MR. BENDER: Some two or three. I think we had three.

DR. PATTERSON: Were you able to recognize the girls who were the telephone operators? Could you recognize Catherine's voice on the phone?

MR. BENDER: No. I didn't know the telephone operator. Another place we used to go which was fun was Atlantic Beach to the Idle Hour. That was a bowling alley.

DR. PATTERSON: Was that right down in the circle area?

MR. BENDER: It was right down in the circle. There was a big casino down at the end of it. The Idle Hour, as I say, was a bowling alley and they had duck pins with rubber bands around them. There was in New Bern on Middle Street too. (Pickett Duffy used to bowl on Middle Street.) There was a juke box and you could also dance down at the beach. That was a great place to go on weekends if you went down to the beach. In the old casino down there I used to play a trumpet. I wouldn't swear to this, but I have a recollection that Paul Whiteman played down there one time.

DR. PATTERSON: He did.

MR. BENDER: Then, Dot Lee Taylor, who is now Dot Lee Jernigan. There was a movie where somebody played a trumpet and somebody danced. Dot Lee and I went down, and I played the trumpet and Dot Lee danced. We still kid about that, at the old casino down at Atlantic Beach. I don't know how old I was. We didn't have a band when I graduated from high school. There were no bands or anything like that. Mr. Harry MacDonald was just teaching. He'd just come there to teach.

DR. PATTERSON: When you were a boy out in Ghent, were the circuses out there?

MR. BENDER: Oh yeah. They used to unload there.

DR. PATTERSON: Where was this?

MR. BENDER: The circuses didn't unload out in Ghent. The carnivals would. I remember carnivals back where the old casino was. The circus trains, as I recall, they would unload back towards Kafer Park down on the railroad track back down that way. I can remember we'd get up at three o'clock in the morning to go down and see the circus train unload. I don't remember them unloading any out behind Ghent, but we used to have carnivals out there frequently.

DR. PATTERSON: Did the circuses set up in Ghent?

MR. BENDER: I don't remember them setting up. Where did they have the circus tents? I really can't recall. I just remember carnivals being out back towards the old casino, but I don't remember the circus. I do remember going to see Babe Ruth get off the train in New Bern. My father loved baseball. He and your father and Dr. Gibbs and Dr. Wadsworth, I think that was the group that when the Coastal Plain League was in full bloom in New Bern, Wednesday afternoons they used to go. They didn't want to sit in the Grandstand. They sat out in the bleachers.

DR. PATTERSON: On the third baseline.

MR. BENDER: On the third baseline and with an umbrella.

DR. PATTERSON: Eating peanuts.

MR. BENDER: That's right, eating peanuts. (laughter) That's where

you sat to watch baseball.

DR. PATTERSON: The town was pretty baseball crazy in those days.

MR. BENDER: Oh, it was. And they had good teams too. Charlie Keller went to the Majors. He played in Kinston. Red Derda is still around here. Stewart Flythe used to pitch.

DR. PATTERSON: Lefty Kennel.

MR. BENDER: Yeah, Lefty Kennel. Then, Kirby Higby. He went to the Majors.

DR. PATTERSON: Bill Ferebee.

MR. BENDER: Yeah, good gosh. I've forgotten about him. That Coastal Plain League played a good round of baseball too. But Wednesday afternoon's, the third baseline in the bleachers, there was a group of doctors there. You could almost count on that.

DR. PATTERSON: I used to go with dad out there a lot. And night games, we saw night games.

MR. BENDER: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, let me turn to a more serious topic, a very important topic. As you grew up, what do you remember about relations between the blacks and the whites?

MR. BENDER: Well, there were blacks and there were whites. In New Bern, segregation was just accepted. I mean, that was just a way of life. What was the black hospital that was built?

DR. PATTERSON: Good Shepherd.

MR. BENDER: Good Shepherd Hospital. I remember when that was built. On the other hand, to give you a personal experience, and this

in today's vernacular I guess would be considered "Uncle Tomish" or something, but we had a negro cook always. Edna Strayhorn who was from Pollocksville worked for us. She was only about 16 or 17. She lived in our house. She had a room up in the attic. I can remember playing sandlot baseball on the corner. There'd be Glenn Sawyer and a group of us. I used to beg my mother to let Edna get out of the kitchen because she could hit the ball and outrun any of us when she'd play baseball with us. But I don't remember any confrontational types with the blacks and whites. Duffyfield, and the blacks lived in their section and the whites lived in their section. It was just a part of growing up and I don't remember thinking about it particularly one way or nother. It was just an accepted thing that the blacks lived in their section and we lived in our section.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you play with any black children?

MR. BENDER: Not except when I came to Pollocksville some. But no, I don't remember playing with any black children.

DR. PATTERSON: Were you here in New Bern during the sixties?

MR. BENDER: No.

DR. PATTERSON: So, you don't know what went on during that time.

MR. BENDER: I don't have any idea. In the sixties I was living in Boston.

DR. PATTERSON: Let's go back to your profession for just a minute.

As a detail man, then an executive in a large pharmaceutical company, what do you see the difference is between the way detail men were when you were doing this and the way they're doing it now?

MR. BENDER: I can't really speak to how they're doing it now, but my perception is that it's much different. Now there are so many group practices. I worked all of Georgia from Atlanta south, eastern Alabama, South Carolina up as far as Charleston but not including Charleston, and then down to Florida not going to Orlando but all the way to Orlando including Ocala and then over in eastern Alabama. When I first started calling on doctors, there were very few group practices.

I don't remember group practices very much. A lot of the territory I had was rural, small towns. As a detail man, I did work in Atlanta later on which was a different environment. When I was coming along, at that time, I think the medical profession, and maybe they still do, and the detail men had a lot of respect for each other. The medical profession looked to detail men as a source of giving information and passing information on. It was very competitive, detail men were, when I was working down south. I thoroughly enjoyed it. I have an idea today that with group practices and formulary committees and hospitals that it's more, I don't know, more formal or something I guess. But I don't know. It's been so long that I really don't know how they operate today.

DR. PATTERSON: I don't guess I do either, Ernest. I remember the relationship as you described it, as a friendly one with mutual respect.

MR. BENDER: In fact, my father encouraged me. He said that he looked forward and welcomed detail men coming into his office to learn things from, to get information.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, we're winding down on this interview now. Are there any other memories of New Bern that you would like to speak to that we haven't addressed?

MR. BENDER: One little thing. We used to play over near where Fort Totten used to be. One of the few cement paved streets was that section that runs from Highway 17 over to 70. It was a wide street, newly paved with cement. That's where we used to go to play hockey on roller skates because it was smooth. Most of roller skating, you had cracks in the sidewalks and so forth. The way we played hockey, and that was a big thing on Sunday afternoons, was with sticks and tin cans. Why some of didn't get killed, I don't know. Because after you hit the tin can a few times with sticks, it would finally get wadded up into like a metal ball. That's where we used to go to play hockey and over at Fort Totten to ride bicycles. That was a great place to ride bicycles, up and down those hills, and also have wars too. I will say something about blacks and whites that I remember. Roller skates were a standard thing. You had roller skates. On Pollock Street; now looking back on it I can see the economic implications involved in it, we white kids would get maybe bicycles for Christmas. On Pollock Street after Christmas going down from McCarthy's corner, most of the black kids had roller skates. Christmas morning, Pollock Street from McCarthy's down where all of the black folks lived there, was just...

DR. PATTERSON: You're talking about going west?

MR. BENDER: Going downtown from where McCarthy's on the corner used to be. Going downtown on Christmas morning, the streets would

be covered with black children in roller skates. I can remember that was a big thing to see.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, McCarthy's store was at Five Points.

MR. BENDER: No. There used to be a fountain there. Five Points is separate. Pollock Street and Queen Street converge coming from downtown out towards Ghent. The streets where Askew's used to have a hardware store is where McCarthy's corner was. There was a big pool there with lights around it and a fountain in there. Mr. McCarthy's big house, as I recall it, he had sort of a big antebellum type house that sat up in the corner there where they converged.

DR. PATTERSON: Where Queen Street and Pollock Street converge.

MR. BENDER: Come together. The pool, the big fountain, was there and had lights all around it. I can remember one winter everything froze. It was a real spectacular thing. I had an uncle that used to come down and play golf. Of course, the Country Club was dirt road all the way out there. I had an uncle from Newport News, Virginia that was a stockbroker and he loved to play golf. He'd come down to visit, mother's sister's husband. He drove down one time I remember in a Cord automobile. We lived in Ghent. He had his golf clubs in the back of his car. When he came to our house he was all upset. He said, "I've been attacked by a bunch of blacks. I damn near ran over some of them." He was all upset. What it was, he had stopped at McCarthy's corner, McCarthy's square as they called it, and that's where caddies used to hang out, the black people that were going to be caddies for people going to the Country Club. So, he stops there

and he's got his clubs in the car and they all converge on him trying to get him to pick one of them up thinking he was going to the Country Club. Well, he didn't know what was going on and he thought he was being attacked by a bunch of black people. He damn near ran over a couple of them he said coming out of there. But he didn't have any idea what was going on. The Country Club then had sand greens.

DR. PATTERSON: Did you say the road was paved out to the Country Club?

MR. BENDER: I remember it being paved. It wasn't as wide as it is. I'm not sure whether all of it was paved. I remember it used to be lined with Crepe Myrtles. Where I live now in Olde Towne, there's a little dirt road back there I was never allowed to go down. When I'd go out to the Country Club, I should never turn down that little dirt road down there because that's where the 101 Ranch was. The 101 Ranch had a reputation of a place where they sold liquor. That's back there in Old Towne where I live. I never thought I'd live back where the 101 Ranch used to be. But the Country Club, it seemed to me it was always paved. Maybe it wasn't. I can't remember that well.

DR. PATTERSON: How do you remember the old clubhouse at the Country Club?

MR. BENDER: As I recall it was a wooden, green, sort of...

DR. PATTERSON: Shingle?

MR. BENDER: Shingle but big wide shed roof veranda type thing around it. I always thought it was real nice. The Country Club is where they used to have big Easter egg hunts on Easter Sunday. The

fondest recollections I have though, maybe as a teenager or growing up, was the Trent Pines Club. Fred and Louise Miles when they bought that, that was just a great place to go. This was back after the war. Just about the time the war started.

DR. PATTERSON: What was the place like?

MR. BENDER: It was the old Sloan mansion. It had an elevator in it. I never saw the elevator operate. You went in the front door and off to the right was a big room which would have been the living room where you could sit around and have drinks and so forth. Of course there was a big porch, a veranda, tile or something out there. There was an elevator just as you came in, which I never saw operated. What was over to the left? I don't remember.

DR. PATTERSON: The dining room?

MR. BENDER: But I don't ever remember eating out there.

DR. PATTERSON: There was a dining room there.

MR. BENDER: There must have been a dining room. The only time I ever went out there was at night with a date. It was just a great place to go.

DR. PATTERSON: About what year was this?

MR. BENDER: 1940-41.

DR. PATTERSON: I'm thinking of a later time in the fifties.

MR. BENDER: This is 1940, '41, '42. In that period.

DR. PATTERSON: At that time then, it was mostly like a lounge rather than a dining area.

MR. BENDER: Yeah. They probably served meals, but at our age

we didn't go out there to eat. If we wanted to eat somewhere, you'd go see how many pecks of oysters you could eat at Guy Hamilton's restaurant down on George Street at the bridge.

DR. PATTERSON: The old bridge.

MR. BENDER: The old bridge going across the Trent River down there at the end of George Street.

DR. PATTERSON: You had steamed oysters there?

MR. BENDER: Steamed oysters. Daddy used to get oysters from Watson's down at the foot of Middle Street. I vaguely remember that. He used to know whoever the Watson was and that's where he used to get his oysters.

DR. PATTERSON: I think that this was maybe Nettie Pinnix's family. I'm not sure. Well, this has been great Ernest. You have just told me some wonderful things that will help our story a lot. The more we talked, the more we remember. This has been a good interview and I thank you for the Memories program for letting me come out here and do this.

MR. BENDER: It's been a pleasure. You need to come out just to visit sometime too. Anytime.

DR. PATTERSON: It's been a good interview and we thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW