

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

VERNA FRANCES BELL FRANCIS
(MRS. CHARLES H. FRANCIS)

INTERVIEW 1035

This is Dr. Joseph Patterson representing the Memories of New Bern Committee. My number is 1000. I am interviewing Frances Francis (Mrs. Charles H. Francis) at her home at 4715 Trent River Drive in New Bern. The number of the interview is 1035. The date is January 25, 1993.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, Frances, the tape is on and I just want to tell you that it's certainly a pleasure for me to be here talking to you and sitting out here looking at Wilson Creek and looking at the Trent River and this beautiful setting. I want it on the tape too that I'm doubly glad to be talking to you because you're a member of our group and you have helped with this Memories of New Bern Program tremendously. You've been one of the interviewers and you've just been a part of it, so it's sort of natural for us to be talking. You've grown up in New Bern and you're full of memories. So let me start out the interview by just asking you first of all to tell me your full name and the date of your birth.

MRS. FRANCIS: I am Verna Frances Bell Francis and I was born on May 13, 1921 on Blades Avenue.

DR. PATTERSON: Were you born at home?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes, I was born at home. My mother and father at that time were living on Blades Avenue. They were buying a house from Dr. Baxter. It was one of these big old square houses with the porch across the front. It had been fixed so it could be two apartments; one upstairs and one downstairs. So, there was a family living upstairs over us named Marshburn. Their son is Chink. He played football in high school. You probably remember Chink

Marshburn. He's still around.

DR. PATTERSON: How do you spell it?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, his name is Clarence, but he's always been called Chink.

DR. PATTERSON: How do you spell that?

MRS. FRANCIS: C h i n k, you know.

DR. PATTERSON: Okay.

MRS. FRANCIS: His eyes were a little bit tilted, (laughter), so in high school he was always called Chink.

DR. PATTERSON: Do you know who the physician was who delivered you?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yes! Dr. Pollock. Dr. Pollock was our family doctor for as long as he lived, as long as he practiced.

DR. PATTERSON: What did you say your birthdate was?

MRS. FRANCIS: May 13, 1921. I was born on a Friday, Friday the 13th, but I never did feel it was real bad luck. At the time, we were living on Blades Avenue in Riverside and my father was working for the old New Bern Ironworks. He had worked there all during World War I making these great big tankers that they delivered stuff in by railroad. He had come to New Bern about 1910 from Carteret County.

Dad was born on the banks of Bogue Sound. At one time the Bell family down there had had quite a large holding, but over the years it got divided among all the children in the family. When Dad came along his father had a pretty good farm, but there were nine children and five of them were boys and there was no way that farm was gonna be

divided anymore, so daddy came to New Bern. There was a business school here at the time. He came up here when he was about eighteen years old to go to business school and get him a job. So he went to business school and worked at the old New Bern Ironworks.

DR. PATTERSON: Excuse me, Frances, where was the business school located?

MRS. FRANCIS: If I can remember correctly, Daddy said it was in the Dunn building, upstairs in the Dunn building.

DR. PATTERSON: Do you remember the name of it?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, I really don't. It went out of business before Daddy finished and graduated. He worked all during World War I at the Ironworks and about 1915 had his left arm caught in a piece of machinery and lost his left arm.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, where was the amputation level? Was it below the elbow?

MRS. FRANCIS: Below the elbow, just below the elbow. It was an unprotected piece of machinery. The company paid him \$500 for his left arm.

DR. PATTERSON: Did he have an artificial arm after that?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, yes. He had a hook that he used for work and he had a wooden hand. He was courting my mother at the time and so he wore that wooden hand one time. He put it on and he put a glove on it and he went to see my mother and my mother made him take it off and he never wore that again. (laughter) But he wore the hook for a long time, as long as he worked at the Ironworks. About the time

I was born, or a little bit before that, he and my mother's brother-in-law, Mr. Mac Duffy Taylor, went into business together and started the grocery store in the house that you're living in down at, well, it used to be 106 East Front Street, or 105, I'm not sure which now.

DR. PATTERSON: Just to clarify that a moment, we decided to call it 604 instead of 606, just counting the numbers on the street, but also because when we lived in Chapel Hill, our address there was 604. It didn't cause any big problem.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, Daddy started a grocery store down there. Of course, we never owned an automobile, he with one hand. At that time he couldn't have afforded an automobile, but also he could not have afforded an automobile with anything to help him be able to drive with only one hand.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, what was that building doing before your father and Mr. Taylor took it over?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't know whether it was vacant at the time, but as far as I know it had always been a store of some kind. When dad opened his business down there, we continued for about a year to live on Blades Avenue. Daddy had the store opened from seven a.m. to seven p.m. and he walked from Blades Avenue downtown every morning, opened the store, ran the store all day, and then walked back to Blades Avenue.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, this was a two-level building. Did he have the store on the first floor?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, um huh. And the upstairs was empty. And so after about a year he and mother decided that trying to buy a house, and he needed the money to put into his business, and that apartment was vacant upstairs, so they cleaned it up and they moved from Blades Avenue and sold their house out there. Then they moved down there so that Daddy didn't have to walk so far.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, did your father and Mr. Taylor own the store?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, they didn't own the building. The building was owned by Mrs. J. B. Dawson.

DR. PATTERSON: She was the sister of Mr. Salter who owned the store before her.

MRS. FRANCIS: Right. And of course Dad, as you can imagine at that time all Dad's business was with Mr. Dawson. Mrs. Dawson was the owner of the building, but Mr. Dawson took care of all the family business of course.

DR. PATTERSON: Was that a congenial relationship?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes it was, it was. Over the years, dad did a number of things to the building that tried to make it more convenient both for us to live in and also for the store, and Mr. Dawson was always willing. Some of the things that changed the store, Dad did.

DR. PATTERSON: What was the business part of it like, Frances? What sort of things did your father sell?

MRS. FRANCIS: Any kind of groceries except fresh meats. He did not keep any fresh meats. Many of his customers would call him and ask him to get them steak or liver or something like that and he always

would call Everhart's market downtown and send one of the grocery boys down there and pick up whatever meat. But not very many customers did that. Now he did sell live chickens. You know, this was the kind of grocery store that ladies in the neighborhood called, gave him an order on the telephone and he would have a couple of bicycles with great big baskets on them and he would usually have two young black boys working for us and they'd get those groceries together and put them in those baskets and the boys would go off. If the ladies ordered a live chicken, Daddy would go out in the back in the chicken yard, catch a chicken, bring it in and take a paper bag and put a hole in the bottom of it, stick that chicken in there and stick his head through it and tie string around his legs and the bottom and put him up there on top. I can remember seeing some of the boys going off so often with these great big baskets full of groceries and sitting up on top of it just looking all around the neighborhood would be this chicken.

(laughter) Usually when he delivered the chicken, the housewife would get him to go in the back yard and wring the chicken's neck. Of course, she usually, in our neighborhood down there most of the ladies down there had a cook and the cook would pluck the chicken and dress it and cook it. But real often the grocery boy would have to kill the chicken for them.

DR. PATTERSON: What did your dad charge for a delivered chicken?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh lord, I don't know. Some of the prices I do remember. I remember at one time he had loaves of bread for nine cents. That was a short loaf. Now a long loaf was eleven cents. The Depression

came along and one of the bread companies started making a short loaf they called it, and they charged nine cents for it.

DR. PATTERSON: Who all patronized the store, Frances, the neighborhood people or all over town?

MRS. FRANCIS: Mostly the neighborhood people. There were a few people from other parts of town who would call and Dad would deliver things, but mostly it was just downtown New Bern. Not just the neighborhood, but downtown New Bern.

DR. PATTERSON: Was this one of the few grocery stores in downtown New Bern?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, no, there were several. Mr. M. M. Weeks had a grocery store at the corner of what is now Tryon Palace Drive and Metcalf Street. There was a grocery store on Broad Street across the street from where the firehouse is now. When I was a little girl a Mr. Whitford ran it. His daughter was the chief of police's wife, Mr. Belangia's wife. She had been Mr. Whitford's daughter and the Whitford's had run the store there. And as a young man Ronald Ipock had worked for them, and when Mr. Whitford was ready to retire, Ronald bought the store out and then it was Mr. Ipock's store. But when I was a real little girl it was Mr. Whitford's store.

DR. PATTERSON: You mentioned the chickens in the back yard. Were there other animals in the back yard?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, no, just chickens. Daddy had a chicken pen back there.

DR. PATTERSON: Did children come to the store and buy things?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yes. Oh yes. All the children up and down East Front Street, of course, came in to get candy.

DR. PATTERSON: Including me.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, to get penny candy. One incident; my father had a really copperplate handwriting, he just wrote a beautiful hand, and he did all of his own bookwork and he did it in pen and ink. You remember Rom Blaylock I know.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MRS. FRANCIS: In high school Rom was a great big strapping boy. He was bigger than Daddy I think. One day the store was empty, it had snowed, so Daddy was working on his bookwork. He had it all laid out on the counter and he was working and Rom came in, "Mr. Bell, I want so and so and so and so!!" Daddy said, "Just a minute, Rom, let me finish this I'm doing." Rom took from behind his back a great big squashy snowball and went "splat" right on Daddy's book! I don't know how Daddy managed it because he only had one arm, but his other arm was very strong because he did everything with it, but he flew around that counter and picked Rom up under his elbows and carried him to the front door and threw him out in the snow. (laughter) I don't know how he managed it. We have a lady now who has moved back to New Bern who's a member of our church named Patsy Ackerman. I do not remember her, but she said as a little girl she lived on King Street and her mother used to let her come to the grocery store to get candy. She said her mother would call Daddy and tell him she was coming, and she would come around the corner to across the street and daddy would walk

across the street and take her by the hand and take her across the street and let her get her candy.

DR. PATTERSON: What kind of candy was sold to the children?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh, tootsie rolls, wall-nuttos. Do you remember wall-nuttos? Everything was penny candy.

DR. PATTERSON: Mary Jane's.

MRS. FRANCIS: Mary Jane's, lemon drops, suckers of all kind, and these great big round things that had candy on the outside and chewing gum on the inside, you know. You would suck them and suck them til the candy was gone then you could blow bubbles.

DR. PATTERSON: And jawbreakers.

MRS. FRANCIS: Jawbreakers, all kinds of them. And of course, I was a little thief. I was not suppose to eat much candy, and when Daddy wasn't looking I'd sneak in and get myself a Mary Jane or a tootsie roll or something like that. (laughter) That was my perk.

DR. PATTERSON: What was the lay-out of the store as you walked in the front door where the front door is now?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, on the right-hand side Daddy had some wooden bins in which he kept potatoes and onions and vegetables. He didn't have the vegetables on refrigeration like you find them now. He would take them and put them in baskets every night and put them in his great big old refrigerator, but in the daytime they were in these wooden bins. Then right in front of the front door there was a stand that one of the cookie companies had, a metal stand. They had great big square boxes that cookies came in and there were lids with glass in

them that fitted on these boxes. The cookies were a penny a piece; fig newtons, and what they call Johnny cakes, and lemon.., oh, I can't remember, chocolate snaps. Of course, he had them in five cent boxes too; chocolate snaps, lemon, not lemon drops, can't remember the name of them, but all kinds of cookies. But then he had these great big square boxes and you could come in and get one cookie, or two cookies if they were real small, for a penny. You see, this was very handy because the lumber company was down back of daddy's store and many of the men who worked at the lumber company would come over there every day and get a little half pint bottle of milk and a can of sardines and a box of crackers and then they would go and get them a Johnny cake or something like that for their desert. They could, you know, get their lunch for twenty or twenty-five cents. Many of the men who worked over in the lumber company came up there every day and got their lunch. In the winter time the store had a great big old pot bellied stove and they would stand around the stove and get warm.

DR. PATTERSON: Where was the counter?

MRS. FRANCIS: When you first walked in, and these cookies were right in front of you, then over to the left there was a glass case with all the penny candy in it. Then beyond that on the left-hand side there was a counter. Then at the back of the store there was this huge refrigerator, an old Golden Oak refrigerator. It had eight doors to it. In the center it had a great big huge door and that was where the ice was put, a 100 pound block of ice. And of course in that day and time, ice was brought around by horse drawn carriage,

cart. And all the children in the neighborhood, of course, running after it wanting the chips. They always stopped at the store because Daddy always had to get another piece of ice. It had this great big door for the ice and then it had six small doors where butter was kept and bacon was kept. The bottom, under the ice, always the milk was put there. And Daddy would always put in there a few coca-colas and things like so that people could get drinks cold. One of the doors always fascinated me. When you opened that door and pulled it out it had a round table, whatever, in it with a great big huge piece of cheese, a round of cheese, and it had a cleaver that was attached.

I worked in the store enough so that by the time I was about ten years old, if anybody ordered a pound of cheese I could go over there and turn that thing around and pull that cleaver down. I could cut a pound just about every time. I couldn't do it again, but I learned to do that. I worked in the store from the time I was old enough, to take orders over the telephone on Saturdays and everything.

DR. PATTERSON: What did a 100 pounds of ice cost then?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh lawd, I don't know, Joe Pat. Maybe fifty cents. I doubt if it was anymore than that, don't you? You know, people would put their signs in their window, you know, ten or twenty-five or whatever. Oh, it was such a great day when Daddy had that refrigerator electrified! He talked to some of the refrigeration people around town and they came and they measured and right where the ice had been they put in a freezer unit or whatever and electrified that and we didn't have to have ice brought through the grocery store

anymore.

DR. PATTERSON: But you missed the ice wagon.

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh, we missed the ice wagon.

DR. PATTERSON: Frances, when the people from the lumber mill would come and get their lunch, would they just walk straight through from the back through the yard to get to the store?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, um huh.

DR. PATTERSON: There were no fences or anything.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, there were. They were so shabby it was easy to get through. (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Now, you all lived upstairs. What was it like living up there?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, I tell you, Joe Pat, I won't say it was shabby because mother was a good housemother and she took care of things real well, but it was cold, it was drafty.

DR. PATTERSON: How did you get up there? How did you get upstairs?

MRS. FRANCIS: Outside steps. Had outside steps.

DR. PATTERSON: On the south side of the building.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. And it had a small porch. And when I was a little girl it only had one door and that was the door on the back.

Now the largest room in the house was on the front and that was the only room that had any heat in it. It had a pot bellied stove in that.

Mother had what they called a new perfection oil stove in her kitchen, but the rest of the house was cold. So when winter time came, the large room in the front was our living room because it had heat in

it. Well, whenever we had any company in the winter time, they'd come up to that little porch in the back and they'd have to come through a bedroom and a kitchen and the dining room to get to our living room.

Now in the summer time, mama would get two of the grocery boys to come up there and they'd move all the bedroom furniture down to that front room and they'd move all the living room furniture back to that back room that had a door on the porch, so in the summer time people didn't have to come through a bedroom to get to our living room. I mean, in the summer time they didn't, in the winter time they did.

So finally, Daddy talked to Mr. Dawson and asked if he would mind if he extended that porch all the way down to the front and had a door cut into the living room where there had been a window, and Mr. Dawson said sure, go ahead. So Daddy had that porch extended and had the door cut into the front so that we didn't have to move our living room furniture once a year, or twice a year. We were poor, but we didn't know we were poor. It didn't make any difference.

DR. PATTERSON: Frances, how did you all make out during storms and hurricanes?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, when I said this about the building, it must not have had a real good foundation under it because in high winds it always swayed. I can remember so well when we had the '33 hurricane.

At that time Daddy hadn't had the ceiling put in in the store. You know, the rafters or whatever you call them showed. The only ceiling to the store was the floor upstairs, and of course that's a real old floor and there were little cracks all between some boards. I remember

getting down on my hands and knees during the hurricane and looking down. Daddy always had hams hanging from the rafters downstairs and I can remember looking down through those cracks during that hurricane and seeing those hams, you know, swinging back and forth downstairs.

So it was not a real steady building. My mother was a very timid woman. One of Daddy's friends used to say to her, "Oh, Mrs. Bell, you're just scared you'll get scared!" But she was afraid of fire and she was afraid of people breaking in, and she was deathly afraid of high winds because she thought that sooner or later that building was just gonna collapse, you know, because it did sway. I'm sure it's much sturdier now. (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Well, just for the record, the side porch that you described and the door, all stayed in placed until two or three years ago when the house was done over and new porches put up there.

In the process of reconstruction we came across some paper credit slips with five cents and twenty-five cents and ten cents. Mr. Salter evidently used to use them when he had the store. Did your dad ever use paper credit slips?

MRS. FRANCIS: You mean for somebody to get their slip and then come back to redeem it?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MRS. FRANCIS: No, not that I know of. Not that I know of. Dad had the kind of business that most people telephoned. A few people came in, but most people telephoned and Daddy sent it to them and he charged it, and we hoped that they would pay once a month. Now they

didn't. (laughter) As you can imagine, they didn't. And some because it was very difficult. I mean, we had neighbors down near the bridge living in some old shabby houses down there that Dr. Hand owned. They were carpenters and things like that and their jobs depended on the weather, and also when the Depression came along they didn't get a great deal of work. They went fishing and they exchanged fish with dad for groceries. So there were a number of people who couldn't pay.

There were some people who just got around to it when they got ready, you know. (laughter) One incident, we had a young colored boy working for us named Felix Hayes. Felix had been found staying by himself in a boxcar down at the other end of East Front Street. He didn't have any family. One of our neighbors was Mrs. Dot Deppe. Mrs. Deppe's son-in-law worked for the railroad and he found Felix down there and brought him home to Mrs. Deppe and Mrs. Deppe fixed a room for him over her shed and he did errands for her. Then daddy hired him to be one of our grocery boys. Mother always gave him his lunch and Mrs. Deppe gave him his breakfast and his supper. He was one of the kindest most gentle people you've ever seen. He worked for Daddy for a long time, longer than anybody else Daddy ever had. One day one of Daddy's customers called and wanted to get a ham, a picnic ham. Daddy said to the lady, "I'm sorry." Now Daddy was a very patient man, but he had run out of patience with her because he knew she could pay her grocery bill and she hadn't done it. So he said to her, "I'm just sorry. I cannot send you a ham. I can't charge anything else to you."

"Oh, Mr. Bell, you send that ham and I'll have a check ready for you!"

I'm having company, I've just got to have a ham for supper tonight!" So Daddy got her order up and he sent Felix down there, and he said, "Now listen, Felix, don't you come back without that check!" So Felix went down there and delivered the order and she said, "Tell Mr. Bell, I'll mail him the check." Well, now, no young colored boy was going to have an argument with a white woman in 1930, you know. So he came back. Well, Daddy was really angry. He was angry with Felix. He was angry with her, but he was angry with Felix. He said, "Now, Felix, you go back down there and get that ham and don't you come back without it!" So Felix went to get the ham and what he met was, the lady said, "Hah! I've already got it in the pot boiling!" Felix walked into the kitchen, took a fork, reached into the pot, got the ham, put it in a paper bag, went back out, put it on his bicycle and brought it home! I guess you know who had ham that week. (laughter) But, you know, things like that happen when you're in a small business. I guess it happens when you're in a big business and when people don't pay too, I know that. But Daddy had a lot of patience with things like that. Mother wasn't very patient. She wanted me to have the things the other children had, you know, and we couldn't always have it, but we managed.

DR. PATTERSON: Frances, how long did you all have that store?

MRS. FRANCIS: Daddy opened it in 1921 and in 1952 I believe it was he bought out Joe Slater and moved his store from East Front Street out there to where Kelso Wheeler Real Estate is now. Joe Slater had had a grocery store there. Daddy was there, I reckon, maybe eight

years and went out of business. He hadn't been there long. He went into meats then. He hired a butcher and started selling fresh meat.

There was not a grocery store out there at that time except Joe Slater's. It was not very long after daddy bought Joe out and moved out there that right down in Five Points Colonial Store built a building and had a grocery store there. Then not too long after, A&P put that great big grocery store on the other side of daddy out in front of the hospital. Daddy was sitting there in between the Colonial Store and the A&P, and so it was not a real successful venture when he moved out there.

DR. PATTERSON: What happened to the little store when you all left in '51?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, for awhile it was vacant, and then a young man bought it who worked for Maola.

DR. PATTERSON: Bought it from Mr. Dawson?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't know whether he bought the store or whether he just rented the store. But his name was Lamb and he was working for Maola. He didn't stay in there and run it himself. I think he had a little store there for a little while and then he went out of business. Then Mrs. Belangia bought it, bought him out. She was doing it for her son Edward. I don't know whether you remember or not, but Edward was retarded. He was not desperately retarded, but enough so that he was very slow. Mrs. Belangia had worked as a young woman in her father's grocery store and then as Daddy needed people extra, on weekends sometimes Mrs. Belangia would come around and work for Daddy.

So she was familiar with the grocery business, and she bought this. She said she knew that she would not live forever and she thought maybe that with bread and candy and canned goods and a few things like that, that Edward, even though he was slow and was not quick to learn things, he could learn enough that he could maybe make his living in a little teeny neighborhood grocery store. But then unfortunately, Edward had a heart attack in the store and died way before his mother did. So she didn't have that reason and so she went out of business.

It was after that, it stayed vacant for awhile. Then Clara and Elliott Bennett bought it. For a long time Elliott just had his little workshop in there and the upstairs was used. I think Clara said almost everybody in the neighborhood used it for storage.

DR. PATTERSON: I think people used it for an art studio at some time.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, at one time.

DR. PATTERSON: Frances, how long did you all live upstairs in that store?

MRS. FRANCIS: We moved across the street when I was fifteen years old, so we lived there about fifteen years.

DR. PATTERSON: Which house did you move into?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, it was called at the time we moved there the Block house. It was owned by Mr. Block who was Marcus Block's daddy. It had been built as a two-family house but it had been made over into a four-family house.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, that stood where the vacant lot stood for

so long. The house was torn down, is that correct?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. Then Mr. Morgan..., no, not .. Yeah, that was his name.

DR. PATTERSON: Sam Morgan?

MRS. FRANCIS: Sam Morgan bought it and he owned it for a long time. His niece, Celia Lively Eudy, is that her name, she lives in Kinston; anyway, she inherited it from Mr. Morgan. It was in really bad shape, really bad shape, and taxes I guess were fairly high, and it didn't rent for very much, and needed a lot of work on it, so she had it torn down. It was cheaper to pay tax just on the lot I'm sure than it was on the house.

DR. PATTERSON: I recall that as a very large house.

MRS. FRANCIS: It was. It was.

DR. PATTERSON: It had an upstairs porch, didn't it?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah, it had an upstairs porch on both sides. As a matter of fact, it was identical in layout to the other double house that is down the street from you.

DR. PATTERSON: The Blades house?

MRS. FRANCIS: The Blades house. The Blades house had had the upstairs porch taken in and made into a sun porch sort of. But as far as the layout was concerned, it was the same.

DR. PATTERSON: Frances, it would be very interesting if you would tell us about the neighborhood when you lived down there. You mentioned the lumber mill and the houses down by the bridge. Could you go into that a little bit more; who the people were, what the houses were like,

where they were? This is what is now the 600 block of East Front Street from Johnson Street up to Queen Street and around Edgerton Drive.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, the house next door to us was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Foscue; and of course the Foscue's daughter, Clara Bennett, still lives there. At the time that I was a small child, it was a two-family house and on the south side a family named Harper lived there. Mrs. Harper was a widow and her son and her daughter lived there, George Harper. Then next to that was the Bunting house, Mr. and Mrs. Bunting and Speed. Their daughter Margaret got married when I was about five years old. She got married at home. I remember climbing up in a tree in front of the Bunting house and watching Margaret as she married Will Moore. After the wedding, which was in the middle of the day, they came running out and got in the car and I was sitting up in a tree watching them.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, is this the other side...

MRS. FRANCIS: This is the other side of the Foscue house. That was the Bunting house.

DR. PATTERSON: This is the south or north side?

MRS. FRANCIS: North side. Then north of that was this big double house that we all think of as the Blades house.

DR. PATTERSON: Vernon Blades.

MRS. FRANCIS: The Vernon Blades house. Then there were two of these small side hall houses. Mrs. Laxace Buford lived in one of them and then Mrs. Dot Deppe lived in the other one. Then the corner house was owned and lived in by Mrs. Lothie Broughton. And on the other

side of the street, the corner house that the Muse McCotter's lived in, when I was real small, the Marks family who had built it lived there.

DR. PATTERSON: Is this the O. Marks family?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't know whether it was O. Marks. There were two Marks families. And of course one of them had built the Weskett house, what I think of as the Weskett house up on Johnson Street and the other Marks family lived there on the corner of Johnson and East Front. But they moved away. I can remember them living there. And then it was occupied by the Orringer family who had the pickle factory and they lived there for quite a long time. Then the Mills family lived there. No, Martha Mills' family, I can't think of the name, (Kirven) but anyway, they lived there for quite awhile, and then the Muse McCotter's bought it and they've lived there ever since. That was on the south side of the big house that we finally lived in, the big two-family house, or four-family house it was. Then next to them was a Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong. Mr. Armstrong had Armstrong Grocery Company, and they lived there. Then next to them was the Biddle house, which of course you all lived in for a long time. Then next to that was the Blaylock house. And then on the corner was the Rowe house, the Noah Rowe's. So it was a very, very nice neighborhood. Very nice!

I guess you would say upper-middle class people. All of them trying very hard to see to it that their children were well educated and able to take care of themselves. That sort of family was the kind of families who were ambitious and tried to do everything that they could for their

children.

DR. PATTERSON: Could you cross King Street now and go on up to Queen Street? Who lived in the 700 block of East Front Street?

MRS. FRANCIS: I really and truly don't remember everybody. The corner house on the east side was a Mr. and Mrs. Harris. Then there were some very shabby houses. The kind of places that people moved in and out of, you know. Now the little house right next to the Harris', I don't remember who lived there, the one that Dottie Lindley has recently restored. When I was about in the fourth or fifth grade, there was a family who lived there named Jones. They had a daughter named Gretchen and a daughter named Marguerite.

DR. PATTERSON: I remember.

MRS. FRANCIS: I'm sure you remember. Marguerite was my age and I used to go down there and see Marguerite. But on down that street there were several houses. One great big old double house that was really in real bad shape and it was the kind of place that people moved in and out of, you know. Then across the street on that block, the first lot was vacant. It didn't have anything built on it. There were several non-descript, I guess you would say, houses, and then the Dill house, the Marcus Dill house. I do remember the Dill boys. All of them were either just a little bit younger or just a little bit older than I.

DR. PATTERSON: That house sat right on the street.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, um huh. And it was one of these big early twentieth century houses with a big porch across the front of it.

DR. PATTERSON: Didn't it burn in the fire?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, no, uh uh. It was there when I was in high school. The Dill's still lived there. You know the other houses were the kind of rental houses that people were moving in and out of.

DR. PATTERSON: The Dill house is gone now?

MRS. FRANCIS: I'm not sure, Joe Pat.

DR. PATTERSON: There's a vacant lot and a small house in the back.

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh huh. Well, it is gone, and I really don't remember when it went.

DR. PATTERSON: Frances, how about going back to the corner of East Front and Johnson and head toward the bridge and describe what that section was between East Front Street and the bridge.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, on the corner of course was the brick house. The people who lived there were Mrs. Slover and her sister Mrs. Ellis.

DR. PATTERSON: That's where Billy Hand lives now.

MRS. FRANCIS: That's where Billy Hand lives. And of course, Mrs. Ellis was his grandmother, but the house belonged to Mrs. Slover.

Mrs. Slover had inherited of course from her husband, and they did not have any children. Her sister, Mrs. Ellis, and her two daughters came and lived with Mrs. Slover. I guess Mrs. Hand and her sister, Mrs. Firstbrook, grew up in that house from the time maybe their father died. I really don't know cause that was before my time. But when Mrs. Slover died, she left the house to her niece, Mrs. Hand. Back of the house between the house and the river, right at the river there

was a great big old two-story house. Then nearer the Hand house there was a double house that two or three families lived in. And all those people who lived down there were relatives. They were brothers and sisters or aunts and uncles. They were carpenters and fishermen. Their names were Buckner and Oakley. Mrs. Oakley had been a Buckner.

The Oakley's lived in the big two-story house and the two Buckner brothers lived in the double house and had umpteen children. I want to mention the Oakley's because this was always amusing to me. They finally moved to Bridgeton. Mr. Oakley's first name was June, and Mr. June Oakley was the groundskeeper for Kafer Park. My father, about the only recreation he had was going on Wednesday afternoons, the stores were always closed on Wednesday afternoons and we'd go to the baseball game. He would always take me. Mr. Oakley kept the park. The baseball game could not start until June Oakley had gone out with his whisk broom and brushed off home plate. Then everybody in the stands would rise and clap for June Oakley and he would bow to everybody. (laughter) And he told everybody that he would rather have that job than be President of the United States!

DR. PATTERSON: Good for him.

MRS. FRANCIS: The Oakley's bought their groceries at our grocery store. When they came to do their weekly grocery shopping, daddy kept the store open on Saturdays from seven-thirty in the morning until midnight, and the Oakley's always came, a car full of them, at ten o'clock on Saturday night and spent two hours buying the weekly groceries. (laughter) I mean, you know, you felt like saying "Get

a life", you know. (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Frances, we were talking about Johnson Street from East Front Street to the east to the old bridge and you have talked about the south side of that street, how about talking about the north side from the corner of East Front and Johnson.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, when I was very small, that was a vacant lot on the corner. There was one of these great old big huge advertising signs. This little shed that I showed you was torn down and the outdoor advertising people acquired that piece of it and built one of these outdoor advertising signs there. Then, around the time I was maybe eight years old, Ham and Bill Ferebee got the corner lot and had a Texaco station there. Then back of them, Mr. Edgerton came and got that lot and had a monument works where he made monuments for the cemetery.

DR. PATTERSON: That's where the name Edgerton Drive comes from.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. And then down on the water, right on the water, there was a machine shop. A man and his son ran it, and I really tried hard to remember their name and I could not think of their name.

But for a long time there was a machine shop down there right by the foot of the bridge. I guess they did all kinds of metal work. I really don't know just exactly what they did, but lots of metal work. So that side of the street was I guess you'd say a business or commercial.

Around the corner, of course, across from where Billy Hand is living now, that was the Bradham house. Mr. Caleb Bradham lived there.

DR. PATTERSON: Before we get to that, can we continue along the

waterfront behind the store. There was a lumber yard there?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes.

DR. PATTERSON: What was that like and who owned that?

MRS. FRANCIS: I think that that was called the Rowland Lumber Company, and honestly, Joe Pat, I don't know who owned it. It went out of business I guess when I was ten or twelve years old.

DR. PATTERSON: That was a pretty big outfit?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes, it was. I can remember as a little girl being on that upstairs porch and seeing the barges come up the river to the lumber yard. They would have little houses on them and whole families living on these barges that brought in, I mean that came and picked up the finished lumber. Of course the timber was cut in the area and brought in probably by truck. I really don't know, but I expect by truck. But I can remember as a little girl watching the barges come up the river and you'd see a little house on it. You'd see a mother. They looked as if they were about five inches tall, something like that. You'd see a mother out there with her clothesline hanging clothes up and the children playing around on the barge. I used to watch that for a long time up until I was, say, ten, twelve years old, something like that.

DR. PATTERSON: Were there some rail lines down there along where Edgerton Drive is now?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes, I'm pretty sure there were. I'm pretty sure that trains came in down there and loaded up too. All of that's been taken up and been taken down a long time ago.

DR. PATTERSON: There were no houses along the there.

MRS. FRANCIS: No, there were no houses along the there. Down at the other end of East Front Street where Mrs. Broughton's house was on the corner, now down back of her there was the office, a good size building down there.

DR. PATTERSON: For the lumber company.

MRS. FRANCIS: For the lumber company. I believe that was the one that was called the Rowland Lumber Company.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, let's go back then to the southwest corner of Johnson and East Front, and that's where Caleb Bradham lived, the man who started Pepsi Cola. What do you remember about all that?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, when I can remember Mr. Bradham, he was always in a wheelchair. He was an invalid for a long time before he died, and my remembrance of him is that he was always in a wheelchair. But I remember Miss Charity very well.

DR. PATTERSON: Is that his wife?

MRS. FRANCIS: His wife was named Charity Bradham. And you know she ran for mayor of New Bern back in the early thirties. Of course she didn't get anywhere, but the first time any woman had ever tried that. Charity declared herself for mayor and ran for mayor. I can remember her very well. Of course, Caleb, Jr. as a young man, always very elegantly dressed.

DR. PATTERSON: George, you remember George?

MRS. FRANCIS: I remember George and I remember Caleb very well. And of course next door to the Bradham's was Dr. and Mrs. Gibbs.

Mrs. Gibbs, to me, was always one of New Bern's great ladies. She really was a great lady. She ran a kindergarten, and so she came over and talked to mother about sending me to kindergarten.

DR. PATTERSON: Where did she have this kindergarten?

MRS. FRANCIS: She had it in the back of her house behind her kitchen. There were a couple of rooms behind her kitchen. There was an L-shaped porch on the back of her house. All of us who went to kindergarten there would go over and go down the driveway and go around the back of the house and come in that back porch, and she had two little rooms fitted up back there for a kindergarten. I went to kindergarten there two years. She was Presbyterian and very distressed because mother didn't take me to Sunday School every Sunday. Now mother had been raised in Harlow and there was a little Methodist church.

She'd always gone to the Methodist church. My father was a primitive Baptist and he would go with her every once and awhile, but he wasn't really enamored of being a Methodist. He was raised in a very Calvinistic atmosphere. So after I started going to kindergarten, Mrs. Gibbs persuaded mother to allow her to take me to Sunday School every Sunday and that introduced us to the Presbyterian church. My father started going and he loved it. So from the time I was four years old I was raised there in the Presbyterian, and that's been my second home.

DR. PATTERSON: What was Rosa Gibbs like? You say she was a great lady. How do you remember her?

MRS. FRANCIS: I remember her as being kind and very, very

dignified, but fun for children. She taught us all kinds of songs and poems. She charged two dollars and a half a week for kindergarten, fifty cents a day. I have heard mother say that if I had a cold or I'm sick and I stayed home, every week Mrs. Gibbs gave her back fifty cents for each day that I didn't attend school. I went to kindergarten there to her two years, and she always seemed to take an interest in me. As I say, she would tell mother that she would like to take me to Sunday School. Mother would get me dressed and I'd go over and go to Sunday School with them and stay and sit with her in church.

One thing I remember about Mrs. Gibbs that I still don't understand, I remember as a little girl sitting beside her in church and they served communion and Mrs. Gibbs would take her bread and put it in her mouth and I would never see her chew. I mean she would put it in her mouth and evidently that bread would melt. I've never been able to manage that. (laughter) When I take communion, I have to chew that thing. (laughter) I remember sitting there looking at Mrs. Gibbs and wonder, where did that bread go? (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Where now were Norfleet and Jane?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, Norfleet was my age and he was in kindergarten at the same time I was, but Jane, she was in school by then. Jane is four years older than I am. So Norfleet and I grew up together in the same neighborhood.

DR. PATTERSON: While we're talking about great ladies, who were some other great ladies you remember in New Bern?

MRS. FRANCIS: Mrs. E. K. Bishop. And of course her influence

is still being felt through the Bishop home. But she was to me just wonderful! She believed absolutely what she learned in church! There was no family that she heard about who was in need that she wasn't there taking food to them and groceries to them and clothes to them.

And the other thing that I remember about her, I remember there was a family that moved in from somewhere way down in Jones County named Wood. They lived in a little shack right there on the corner of Broad and Hancock Street right beside where the fire station is now. They had a lap baby and a knee baby and a floor baby and yard baby. I mean just a whole family full of children. I can remember Mrs. Bishop taking things to them, but that was not the end of it. She was not only interested in their physical well being, she was interested in their spiritual well being and she saw to it that those children went to Sunday School at our church. She would go around there and she would get them and she would take them to Sunday School. She really and truly lived her faith! If there were any young women who came into our church, business women or school teachers or anything like that who lived at the Gem or one of the boarding houses or something like that who had jobs, she would have them come and sit with her. I remember my aunt, who was unmarried, came and lived with us in 1928 for quite awhile and worked at the grocery store for Daddy, and so she went to Sunday School and church with us. Mrs. Bishop took my aunt under her wing and invited her and took her to the Business Woman's Circle. My aunt didn't have any place to entertain, and so Mrs. Bishop would always open her home for some of these teachers or some of these young

business women who did not have any place to entertain. They could make cookies or something and they could have circle meeting at her house.

DR. PATTERSON: At that fine home at the corner of New and East Front Street.

MRS. FRANCIS: That's right. She was to me one of the great ladies in New Bern! Mrs. Jack Hollister, she used to tease my daddy and say, now I mean, little Jack's mother, Mrs. Sophie Hollister, and she used to tease my daddy and say, "I declare, Bell, when you opened this grocery store you didn't have anything in here anymore than I had in my pantry!"

She was a great lady. I thought that Mrs. Sarah Marriner was a great lady. Of course there were a lot of them. There were a lot of them. And of course New Bern had its eccentrics too. (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Do you want to speak about some of the eccentric people?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, one of them particularly is Mrs. Emma Hartsfield. She really was an eccentric.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, where did she live?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, she lived in the house on the corner of Change and East Front Street that Billy Bell is doing over now, the one we thought of all these years as the Maxwell house, of course. She evidently had enough income that she could have dressed any way she wanted to. Mother used to do sewing for her. She had beautiful clothes.

She would bring them to mother, mother would alter them, hem them and everything and then they hung in her closet. When you saw Mrs.

Emma she always had runs in her stockings and her slip always showed. You know we had this sewing room in New Bern that made men's clothes. First of the Depression, they fixed them a little outlet downstairs in that sewing room that was across from the railroad station and sold men's overcoats. So Mrs. Emma went up there and bought her a man's overcoat and that's what she wore all during the Depression. I can see her now. She used to come down to our house at night. Daddy was always downstairs. He went back in the store at eight o'clock every night and did his bookwork. Mother would do some sewing for Mrs. Emma and she'd come down there to fit clothes and everything. Well, as I said, we only had heat in one room and so I had to sit there and do my lessons while mother was fitting her dresses. Then she would sit down and she would reach in this pocket of this great big old coat and she'd take out a great big comb of dirty tobacco twine and a square of crocheting and her crochet needle and she would sit there for an hour with mother telling her all the gossip of the early century. (laughter) And of course, you know, little pitcher sitting there with big ears, I absorbed it all, you know, about whose grandfather did this and whose great-grandfather did that and so on, and she would sit there and crochet. I don't think she ever finished that bedspread. But she always carried around in that pocket a great big comb of tobacco twine and was crocheting.

DR. PATTERSON: Do you remember any other memorable people?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, I don't know. I do remember her very well though.

DR. PATTERSON: Getting back to the Bishop's for a minute, did Mr. Bishop work with Mrs. Bishop in all these great endeavors?

MRS. FRANCIS: Not that I know of, Joe Pat, but he must have been a very fine man because he allowed her to use her finances to do all these things. You know a lot of men would not have allowed their wives to do that.

DR. PATTERSON: They had no children.

MRS. FRANCIS: They had no children. She really looked after people. To me she was just a great lady.

DR. PATTERSON: I remember her as Miss Annie.

MRS. FRANCIS: Um huh.

DR. PATTERSON: Frances, you told me a little ways back about a situation involving commitment of someone you knew to Dorothea Dix Hospital to illustrate how easily in those days such commitment could have been achieved. I wonder if you would speak to that for a minute.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, just a little bit, Joe Pat. There was in our neighborhood a woman who was not exactly normal. She became so wrapped up in the Salvation Army that she was going off and leaving her little boy shut up in an apartment by himself and going to Pollocksville and Jacksonville and Vanceboro and different places with the Salvation Army, using the tambourine and preaching. Her aunt, who had raised her, was very distressed about that and unfortunately made a threat and said, "Now, don't you go off and leave him shut up in that apartment anymore! Because if you do, then I'm going to the welfare department. I'm gonna have arrangements made and I'm gonna

take him and raise him." As a result of that, sometime when he was spending a day with his aunt and came down to play with me, my father had gone to the bank and mother was in the grocery store keeping the grocery store, and this little boy and I had been playing in the yard and we got dirty and mother sent us upstairs to wash out hands. His mother came looking for him and mother sent her on upstairs. Well, in a few minutes her aunt appeared, very distressed, so afraid that she was going to kill this little boy. She didn't. She locked herself and the little boy in our apartment upstairs. One of the neighbors got a ladder and climbed up and went in. He and my father tried to talk to her and calm her down. She grabbed my mother's sewing shears and stuck it in the back of her head. By bedtime that night, she had been committed to Dorothea Dix. It was evidently very easy to do that in those days. Now it's not easy to commit anybody. But she was there about thirty years. That did happen in our neighborhood. It was sort of traumatic for my mother. I was only five years old and I don't guess I paid too much attention to it. I don't think it scarred me, but it really upset my mother. She never would use those sewing shears again!

DR. PATTERSON: It made an impression on you too. Frances, you told me a very interesting story about your mother sending you downtown to get some things.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. Mama was a seamstress. She took in sewing. By the time I was seven years old, you know a spool of thread only cost a nickel then, Joe Pat. She would give me a nickel and a little

piece of material. You know, the streets were not busy with cars then, there was very little traffic, and she would send me from East Front Street down to Kress with a piece of material, get the clerk to match it and buy a spool of thread and come running home. You wouldn't now send a seven year old from East Front Street down across Broad into that much traffic, but mother didn't have any qualms about it. Course I was walking to school every day, but that was just, you know, three or four blocks up Johnson Street.

DR. PATTERSON: I think this is a good point in our conversation for me just to ask you to speak to some of the things that are of particular interest to you.

MRS. FRANCIS: I think it's real interesting as I look back. You know, our school closed for an hour in the middle of the day and everybody went home for lunch, except those who had come on the school bus brought their lunch with them. Really, there was not very much in the way of a lunch room. They had a little wooden building there.

There were a few children who got their lunch at school, but most of them who ate in the lunch room were people who came on the bus and had brought their lunch would go in there and get a cup of milk. Everybody else went home. Even the children way out in Riverside, they had an hour. They'd go flying out National Avenue and eat their lunch and walk back. There were not very many who were given rides.

So school let out at three-twenty, but we had an hour in the middle of the day for lunch. Almost everybody walked home and ate lunch at home. Another thing I think is interesting is about the library.

Of course the library was a private library. It was in a little house next to the Christian Science Church and it was run by a group of ladies who had formed a library association. You had to be a member and, you know, pay your dues to get your books. But when the post office was built and the ladies of the library association acquired the John Wright Stanly Home, and that was moved around to face New Street, the library became a free public library, and so for the first time I was able to go and get books.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, Frances, who were some of the ladies involved in this private library?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, you know, Joe Pat, I really don't know. You know, I was just a girl and I didn't pay too much attention. But the one I did know was Miss Fannie Howerton. She was the third grade teacher and she was the part-time librarian.

DR. PATTERSON: At the John Wright Stanly House.

MRS. FRANCIS: That's right. She would only allow me to take out books by Emily Lorrington, Grace Livingston Hill, Gene Stratton Porter, and people like that. She wouldn't even let me read a Pearl Buck. Now, a librarian wouldn't get away with that. (laughter) I was in the eighth grade and all through my high school years that's the sort of thing that I read. I was so naive that when I went away to college and I found that there were other girls my age who had read best sellers, I couldn't believe it, you know, because she was very careful about what those of us who were innocent and high school students and teenagers read. If we carried a book up to the desk and

she looked at it and thought that was not suitable for us, she said, "No, I don't think you better get that." (laughter) She was a real interesting lady. Just think, she did this for practically nothing, you know. It was a time when there was not a lot of money and she did this as a labor of love. She really did.

DR. PATTERSON: Upstairs at that time there were apartments in the building.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes. And there was a building back of it. There was a little building back of it that was renovated and made into a house. I remember when Ecky and Sue first came here from Goldsboro.

They lived back of the library in this little wooden house. It finally got so that it was at the point that it was so hard to take care of that it was torn down. Of course the ladies were hoping that being able to rent out these apartments would help them defray the costs of the building. There was still a library association, but they took care of the building.

DR. PATTERSON: Did the library association own that building then?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. But I think it was one of these things that the federal government gave it to them for maybe a small amount of money when they had to move it. I think the library association was able to acquire it for a very small amount of money, and they renovated it. I'm sure it was a struggle for them.

DR. PATTERSON: Did they sell the building to Tryon Palace then?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, I think they gave it. I think they gave it.

It got to the point they really couldn't take care of it anymore.

DR. PATTERSON: This was right across from the Presbyterian church.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

DR. PATTERSON: That brings us to the church. The church has been a very important factor in your life. I wish you would talk about that a little bit.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, I just sort of have always felt like it was my second home, you know. I grew up, starting at four, going to Sunday School there and going to church, and by the time I was ten, singing in the children's choir. Mr. H. B. Smith's daughter, Rosalie Smith, had graduated from Salem by then and had come back to New Bern and was teaching piano here. She had a youth choir, the children's choir and a youth choir, and so I began doing that. Then of course, we had our young people's meetings on Sunday night and that's where I made my friends. And then when it was time for me to go to college, Mr. McClure who was our pastor at the time, helped me get a scholarship and I went to Montreat, which was a Presbyterian college up in the mountains in our general assembly's mountain home. That was their conference center. After my mother died, going through her things I found a paid bill for my room, board, and tuition for 1939-1940, \$243.00. Can you imagine at that time? Course my books were extra, my laundry was extra. We had a washroom in the basement. Most of us did our own laundry up there. That was a two year college. We had really good teachers. Just really good teachers. You'd just be

surprised how good they were in a small college that charged so little.

I was very fortunate. I had a wonderful Bible teacher, a Miss Rachel Hinderlight. She had just gotten her Master's degree from Yale University. Then she went on to get her Doctor's degree. She was the first woman to be ordained by the Southern Presbyterian Church when they finally did ordain women. She taught for many years at the School of Christian Education and Seminary in Richmond, then went out to Austin, Texas and taught out there. So she was a wonderful teacher.

We had really good teachers there! Women who were really dedicated to their profession. After two years there then I went to what is called UNCG now. At that time it was WCUNC...

DR. PATTERSON: Woman's College.

MRS. FRANCIS: And got my degree there in Home Economics with a minor in Chemistry. I taught for four years before Chuck and I were married. That brings me to the servicemen's club that our church had.

I taught one year away from home. I taught up near Danville, Virginia. The school in which I taught burned during the year and so I didn't try to go back up there. I got a job teaching down in Pamlico County and stayed at home with Mother and Daddy and drove back and forth every day. Our church had a servicemen's club started. The Synod started it. They had one in New Bern and they had one in Raleigh and they had one in Charlotte and they had one in Jacksonville, wherever there was a concentration of servicemen.

DR. PATTERSON: Was this during the war?

MRS. FRANCIS: This was during World War II. Mrs. Marriner was

the hostess.

DR. PATTERSON: Where was it held?

MRS. FRANCIS: It was held in the fellowship building. The women in the church would bring cakes and pies over the weekend. It was open Friday night and all day Saturday and then Sunday from the time church was over until bedtime. Some of the people had brought sofas and easy chairs and lamps. Mr. Stevenson, from Stevenson's Brickyard...

DR. PATTERSON: Mark Stevenson.

MRS. FRANCIS: Mr. Mark Stevenson gave us two ping pong tables. Somebody, I don't know who, whether it was Mr. Stevenson or somebody else, gave us an electric record player, you know, turn table and everything. Lots of people gave us records. Mrs. Marriner was the most gracious person you've ever seen. She asked the college girls, now, not any of the high school girls, but she asked the college girls to come in, who were here that was that age during the summer and then we'd graduated, on a Friday and Saturday nights, Sunday afternoon, play ping pong and help entertain the boys. She was so warm and loving and gracious, and, Joe Pat, during all that time I never saw one boy act in any way out of line. They came in, she met them graciously, they responded in kind. She had taken music, but she really played by ear and she could play anything you could hum. She would go to the piano and she would play all of these popular songs of the time; Paper Doll and Tangerine and things like that that the boys would request. At five o'clock on Sunday afternoon, maybe she would have

been playing about a half a hour and we would be sitting around there singing popular songs, and then at five o'clock on Sunday afternoon she always had a vesper hour and we had a hymn sing and all of these young men would get hymn books and they would sing with us. But in all that time, I never saw one discourteous, I never saw one who acted as if he were under the influence of alcohol, I never saw anybody take anything. Henry Willis, who was our sexton at the time, he would move all of the Sunday School chairs out and pile them up in a room in the back and he would put the sofas out and the easy chairs out. One little side room had a big table in it and some easy chairs and lamps. The ladies in the church would bring current magazines. In the kitchen there was always coffee, there was always ice tea. Mrs. Marriner always had pimento cheese, she always had tuna fish salad or chicken salad sandwiches that somebody brought in. The boys would come in and have their meals and cake and pie that the ladies had brought. It was really a very nice experience. It really was. That's where I met my husband.

Chuck was Presbyterian. He was not in the Marine Corps, he was in the Army and he was stationed at Fort Macon with the Coast Artillery.

He was in charge of the post exchange down there, and so he used to have to come up to New Bern to the wholesale houses. He had wandered in and had been coming in there for quite awhile before I met him.

We met in August of 1942. That winter I was away teaching school.

Then, I lived here at home and went back and forth to Pamlico County to teach. I would go on the weekends down, and so Chuck and I courted there. We were married just before Christmas in '45. He was an

organist. When Mrs. Marriner found that out she got in touch with Laura Bryan who was organist in our church. Laura seldom had a substitute, so she invited him to come around to her house and they became very friendly, and if she wanted to take a weekend off, she would make arrangements and Chuck would play the organ in the church for her so she could take a weekend off. So, this was how we met and this is where we did our courting, was in the fellowship hall down at the church. When we were first married we went to New Jersey to live and we lived up there four years, then we moved back to New Bern and settled. I've heard the expression, and I don't think it's very sensitive, about the World War II, "Oh, what a fun war!" But you know, for us, to a certain extent it was a fun war because we really did enjoy it, you know. We had a great number of young boys come in who were Italian Catholic. When the assistant pastor, or rector over at St. Paul's found out about it, his name was Elward, Father Elward, he began coming over and visiting with us, having his supper over there because many of his parishioners would go to church over at St. Paul's and then they would come right on over to our church and have lunch and spend the afternoon. And so, he finally was able to persuade the Catholic church to take this little house that was next door to the church and turn that into a servicemen's club. And then your mother did this in the Episcopal church for awhile and then in her father's house, didn't she?

DR. PATTERSON: Um huh. Victory house.

MRS. FRANCIS: The USO was here, but there was so many young men

here on the streets, and many of them enjoyed being in a more private, I guess you would say, atmosphere than in the USO.

DR. PATTERSON: What was New Bern like during the war? You've mentioned the service centers. What else was going on in town? Was it a busy time?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh, it was very busy! The interesting thing was how many people took their homes and made them over so that there were little apartments, because there were so many, there was just so many young servicemen here and their wives looking for places to live. All up and down East Front Street, I can't tell you how many people down there. Well, I think Mrs. Rowe's house had been made over into about six or eight apartments at least. At least five or six. Many of them would put a sink and a stove in one of their bedrooms and rent it out as a little apartment. My father was a very modest man. There were an awful lot of babies born on our street during that time and it used to sort of distress daddy because the girls didn't have a lot of money and sometimes their clothes were really not adequate for someone who was expecting a baby, you know. That just used to bother Daddy. After Chuck and I were married, he and mother came up to New Jersey to visit with me and we took them to New York. On the subway platform in New York here was this young woman who looked as if she was gonna have a baby just any minute. Daddy took his elbow and punched mother and said, "Looka there! They're doing it in New York too!"

DR. PATTERSON: Well, I can tell you that this business of looking for rooms during the war was everywhere. Alice and I were in California

and we had the same problem as the young people did in New Bern--finally finding a room somewhere to live. Do you remember the trains coming through going to Cherry Point during that time?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes.

DR. PATTERSON: Were they loaded with troops, or what were they carrying?

MRS. FRANCIS: Joe Pat, you know I remember mostly that they were trains that had gasoline for the airplanes and things likes that. I don't think I remember all that much about troop trains. But I do remember lots and lots of trains going through with equipment. You could see them going through with tanks on them and things like that, and of course the tankers that carried the airplane gasoline. But it was a busy time in New Bern. It really was.

DR. PATTERSON: Frances, getting back to churches for a minute. You and Chuck have been so active and involved in the Presbyterian church. It's been wonderful. As you look at New Bern, as you came along, would you say that the churches have meant in general a lot to this town?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh I think so. I think so. As I remember growing up, you didn't know very many people who were not connected in someway with the local church. Sometimes it seemed as if the Baptist outnumbered the population. (laughter) I think that our churches had a lot of influence on New Bern. Do we have much more time?

DR. PATTERSON: Did the churches respond pretty well in times of emergencies in this town? You mentioned the response in World War

II with the social clubs. In disaster, like fires or hurricanes, did the churches meet the challenge?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, Joe Pat, I think they did as much as they were able. But you know, New Bern during the late twenties and the thirties, didn't have a lot of money. I can remember when Mr. McClure, who was our pastor during the thirties, his salary was only about \$1,500 a year and the manse and a little bit of travel allowance, and sometimes they couldn't even meet that. But I think always it was a place where people went if they were hungry, to see if somebody could help them.

I think the church met that challenge certainly just as well as they could. I think it was a matter of only doing what they could because they didn't have that much money.

DR. PATTERSON: Let's turn to politics for a moment. Your dad was involved in politics to some degree.

MRS. FRANCIS: A little bit. A little bit. I think it was interesting the way it was over. Daddy decided around 1949, '48 or '49, to run for alderman. Some of the neighbors in the neighborhood had talked to him about it and said they would support him and suggested that he run for alderman, so he did. Mr. Roberts was mayor at the time.

DR. PATTERSON: George Roberts.

MRS. FRANCIS: Mr. George Roberts was mayor at the time. Fred Hussey was on the board. He was an alderman. Mr. Mack Lupton was an alderman and Mr. Coyt Carter was an alderman at the time. Daddy ran and he was elected. He ran again and he was re-elected. Then

the "young turks" came along and threw the old rascals out.

DR. PATTERSON: Who were the "young turks"?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, principally, Skeeter Richardson. (laughter)

But the members of the Board of Aldermen did a foolish thing. It was at the time when they were getting rid of the power plant, and at that same time the gas people wanted to sell their plant. We had a city manager at the time and he looked into it and he talked to the Board of Alderman and they all talked it over and they thought that maybe this would be profitable for New Bern. Maybe it would be a good idea to buy this gas plant. So they tripped themselves up, and I think they did something that was very foolish. I didn't know anything about until my light bill came and here was this little piece in there plugging the buying of the gas plant. Well, you know, Joe Pat, that made people furious that the Board of Aldermen politicked through their light bill!

Soon as I got mine and I saw it, I thought to myself, "Oh Dad, what have you done?!" I went down and talked to him about it and he said, "Well, how will we get the news out to people if we didn't do this?"

I said, "Daddy, if you really felt this was the thing to do, you and the other members of the Board of Aldermen should have reached into your own pocket, got some money, taken an add in the Sun Journal and written the reasons in there and paid for it as to why you felt that the city would find it profitable to own the gas plant." Well, of course, it made many of the young people very angry, as you can imagine, and a number of them got together and organized and politicked and threw the old rascals out. (laughter) And that was the end of Daddy's

political career. But he was an alderman for two terms. I thought Daddy was very conscientious and he was a very imaginative man and I thought he was a good alderman, but, we all trip up sometime, don't we? And that was a very foolish thing to do.

DR. PATTERSON: Frances, would you like to talk a little bit about development of recreation facilities in New Bern?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, when I was in high school, the block of Craven Street between Pollock Street and South Front, which of course is now called Tryon Palace Drive, had been paved, was very smooth, and every Friday night it was blocked off and all the young people were allowed to go down there and roller skate. As far as I know this is the first of any sponsorship of recreation for the youth in town. Of course it was not too long after that in the early forties that the recreation building was built out on George Street and was used for junior basketball teams. It had a stage. They developed a concert series and that was held out there. The Civic Theater was organized and the plays were given at the recreation center. So the city really did get into it. I guess it was a new thing. Maybe in other places there was a lot of recreation. I remember as a young girl, Chatauqua used to come to New Bern. You remember Chatauqua coming to New Bern?

DR. PATTERSON: I do and you're one of the very few people who even speak to that. Tell me about it.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, I was young enough so that I really didn't know too much about it, except that it was held on Broad Street where the firehouse is now, what I remember. The tent would be put up there,

this was before the firehouse was built, and the tent would be put up there and they would have lectures and they would have plays. My father's sister, who lived with us, she just loved plays and she would go. Daddy would go to the lectures and my aunt would go to the plays.

I remember mother taking me once or twice down there to the tent and seeing a play, which was, you know, different, something entirely different. Sometimes you'll mention Chatauqua to people and they don't know what you're talking about.

DR. PATTERSON: Where did these folks come from?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, I guess all over the United States. I don't know, Joe Pat, but I guess it was organized in Chatauqua, New York.

I don't know, but this is my feeling that these were things that went sent out from Chatauqua, New York.

DR. PATTERSON: Now, this name really is associated with New Bern as I recall. Chatauqua in Indian language means "By the river" and it was taken up to New York by the Tuscarora Indians from New Bern I think. But anyhow, you remember the tent on the school green across from the Masonic Theater?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't believe I remember that.

DR. PATTERSON: Chatauqua used to put their tents up there. That's where I remember it.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, where I remember it was on Broad Street in that vacant lot before the firehouse was built.

DR. PATTERSON: We were talking, Frances, about the movies.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, you know, every school child had to go on

Monday afternoon. The movies, when I was a girl, they would have Monday, Tuesday, the same play, the same movie, and then Wednesday they'd have a different one with a serial, and the Thursday and Friday they'd have a different one, and then on Saturday of course was always the western and the serial and a whole afternoon of jollity for ten cents. But if you didn't get that dime on Monday to go to the first run of the first movie of the week, you were really disappointed! Usually, went to the movies on Monday. I stayed in daddy's store and I'd take orders and work real hard on Saturday morning so that I would have a dime to go to the movies Saturday afternoon.

DR. PATTERSON: What theaters were around then?

MRS. FRANCIS: The Masonic of course, and the Athens Show Shop, which eventually became the Tryon Theater. But when I was a little girl it was the Athens Show Shop. I didn't go down there very much. Most of the time I went to the Masonic because it was close to home. But I loved the movies, the serials on Saturday afternoon. I didn't go on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday, but I was very disappointed if I didn't get to go on Monday.

DR. PATTERSON: When you lived down by the river on East Front Street, did you go swimming down there?

MRS. FRANCIS: No! No. I didn't know how to swim and mother would not allow me to go to the river. Now, Dr. Hand had a place down beyond the Buckner houses, a wharf and a clubhouse for his gang. The boys went down there and went swimming. But it was not a place where you could walk out, you know. You had to be able to swim and be able

to jump overboard and swim down there, and mother would not allow me to go down there, so I didn't do any swimming in the rivers. Now I did go with other young people whose families had cars and would take us down to Flanner's Beach sometime. And of course there you could walk out quite a distance before you were deep enough to swim.

DR. PATTERSON: Now that's on the Neuse River.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, down toward Cherry Point. About half way to Cherry Point. Of course, it's now I guess part of the National forest system, isn't it?

DR. PATTERSON: I think so. Was that run by the Will Flanner family? Is that where the name came from?

MRS. FRANCIS: I think that's where the name came from. Now, I don't think it was even run, you know. They just allowed people to go down there and go swimming.

DR. PATTERSON: Is was not supervised swimming.

MRS. FRANCIS: No. No. You'd go in family groups. By the time I was in high school, sometimes our youth group from church would go down and picnic down there and we'd go swimming. But that was shallow quite a ways out and you could walk a long way out there before you were deep enough to swim.

DR. PATTERSON: Frances, in this program, as you know, we're trying to paint a picture of New Bern as it evolved through the fifty or so years we're talking about, and one of the important issues that we want to address as carefully as possible is race relations in New Bern.

I wonder if you would look back at how things were between the races

when you grew up and make any comments that you would like to about segregation, integration, the civil rights movement, the Martin Luther King episode, and so forth. I'd like to have your thoughts on how New Bern has handled the race situation.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, I really don't know that I am capable of speaking about it. As a child, we of course did not have servants, but we always had young black men carrying our groceries. As far as I know, the relationship was friendly. I do know that women who worked in other people's kitchens, Joe Pat, worked very hard for very little money. They were seldom picked up and carried home the way they are now. They walked. They walked from James City. They walked from Duffyfield. And they would be in people's kitchens in time to cook breakfast and they would stay most of the day. I'm not sure, I think that most of the housewives who had cooks were kind and I think they were probably caring and gave food to these women to take home to their children. But it was a completely different time. One would not dare call a white lady by her first name! It was a time when there was such a separation that there was not, except between perhaps children and their nurses, there was not a real close relationship I don't think.

But the best that I can tell, the final end of it was fairly smooth in New Bern. There were some difficulties at the high school. There were a few incidence of some of the black people in New Bern coming into some of the white churches that had caused dissention. I want to tell you that in our church, the decision was made early on, that any time any blacks showed up they would be seated just like anybody

else. I remember one incidence with Laura Bryan. I think Laura Bryan was one of our great ladies too. She was the organist for our church for many, many years and a woman of great dignity, and very aristocratic, if you can use that word. A lady, a real lady. I remember this so well. One Sunday morning a group of black people came in and were seated downstairs near the front. Laura was playing the organ and she looked around and saw them. After they had been there about ten or twelve minutes, ten or fifteen minutes, they got up and left.

Laura was incensed and upset! "If anybody has hurt their feelings, I can't stand it!! I just can't stand it!! I hope nobody said anything to them to hurt their feelings!" Now she was from the age period and a class period that if anybody could have been snobbish it could have been Laura, but she was not. She was so upset! Well, we were grateful when we found out what had happened. There was a black doctor down at Cherry Point. He had been asked to speak to Ebenezer Presbyterian Church in New Bern, which is the black Presbyterian church, and he was preaching there that Sunday. And this group, some black people and some whites, some nurses and some other friends of his from Cherry Point had come up to New Bern to hear him preach at Ebenezer. Well, they just heard Presbyterian church, and so they came to our church, and when they found out that they were at the wrong church they asked for directions and they got up and the ushers told them where to find Ebenezer and they left, and that's the reason they left, not because they had been insulted or made to feel unwanted. But this was one of the things. I loved Laura Bryan. She was really a wonderful,

wonderful musician, and as I said, one of New Bern's great ladies, and she was just incensed to think that somebody had hurt their feelings! I thought that was very telling and I was glad to hear what she had to say.

DR. PATTERSON: Frances, what was downtown New Bern like long years ago?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, you know, I always thought of it as a busy place, Joe Pat, but I don't know whether it was or not. My experience, most of the time, was on Saturday night. My mother had a cousin with whom she had grown up. She was Mrs. Charlie Taylor whose husband ran the old Terminal Hotel and then after that ran the coalyard. She and mother went shopping every Saturday night. The stores downtown were open on Saturday night when I was a little girl until nine o'clock.

My aunt had a car, she was mother's cousin but I always called her Aunt Bessie, and every Saturday night she would come right after supper in her car and pick us up and I would have to go with them. She was a shopper. I mean, you hear the expression now, "Shop til you drop", she would shop until she dropped. She would go downtown every Saturday night, mother didn't have any money to spend, she had some, and every Saturday night she would shop and mother and I would go along with her. We'd go to Kress and we always had to go to the Vogue. I can remember as a little girl going in the Vogue dress shop and it was really beautiful in there. It was all decorated in grey and silver and it had one of these sofas in the middle of the store that was round, great big round sofa that was all covered in grey velvet. We'd go

in there and I was directed to that sofa and I was not suppose to move.

I had to sit there while Aunt Bessie went through all of the dresses and looked at all of them. And that was every Saturday night. New Bern was busy on Saturday night. A lot of people went shopping every Saturday night. I guess maybe people who came in from the county and who came in from Pamlico County. I really don't know, but a lot of people shopped on Saturday night. DR. PATTERSON: Who ran the Vogue?

MRS. FRANCIS: Mr. and Mrs. Carlton Parsons.

DR. PATTERSON: And it was located where?

MRS. FRANCIS: It was located on Middle Street across the street from the First Baptist Church. It really was a beautiful store. It really was. I mean, as I remember it, all decorated in silver and grey. I may be wrong, you know, I don't know, but that's what I remember.

DR. PATTERSON: You remember it correctly I think, and you might be interested in knowing that young Carlton Parsons has been in New Bern for the last month.

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh, is that right?

DR. PATTERSON: He comes very frequently from Florida. Well, Frances, let me turn to another subject now and ask you what you remember about the Depression and how New Bern was affected by the Depression.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, one of the things I remember is the lumber mills were closing. There were several lumber mills around in the New Bern area. And I think two things happened at the same time. Our first growth forest began to give out and the Depression came along

at the same time, so there were a lot of layoffs. I know that during the Depression it was a time when it was a whole lot harder for a lot of people to pay their grocery bills. It really was. I think there were a lot of people who were hard hit. For instance, Mr. Mitchell Roundtree, the Roundtree's who lived in our neighborhood, Mr. Roundtree I think had had an automobile agency and lost it. He did beautiful cabinet work and he did what he could cabinet work.

DR. PATTERSON: Did they live on East Front Street down toward the south end?

MRS. FRANCIS: When I was real small they lived on Craven Street next door to Mrs. Carraway. I don't know whether they owned their house or not, but they moved from there to Johnson Street across the street from Dr. and Mrs. Gibbs. They lived there for quite awhile.

And then they lived on King Street in that two-story house right back of the corner house that had been the Moulton house. They lived there and he had quite a shop in his back yard by then, you know, along toward forties and the end of World War II. But they finally did build a little house down on East Front Street next to where the Pack-A-Sack is now.

DR. PATTERSON: That's where Molly eventually lived in.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. But I think it hit a lot of people like that who had had businesses. And I think I'm right that Mr. Roundtree had had at one time an automobile agency. I don't know, but I imagine from the kind of work that he did, maybe he loved what he did after that, you know, fixing furniture.

DR. PATTERSON: Yes. I remember him as a great man in that field. As a physician, I'm always interested in people's memories about how medicine used to be in New Bern. What was it like when you came along? Doctors were making house calls.

MRS. FRANCIS: Every year I had earaches. Every year I had earaches and Dr. Pollock always came to the house. Always! And when I was about four or five years old, I was playing next door on the Foscue's steps and I fell and split the edge of my chin. Mr. Foscue had just come home from delivering the mail, so he picked me up and Daddy got in the car and we went flying up to Dr. Pollock's office to get my chin fixed. Well, my father had a very weak stomach. He couldn't stand to see blood. (laughter) Dr. Pollock was going to sew my chin up and he said to Daddy, "You hold her legs and Singletary" (you know, that's what he always called his nurse, Miss Singletary, he always called her Singletary) "Singletary, you hold her hands and Bob you hold your feet, I'm gonna sew her chin up." Well, in about two minutes Daddy was flat on the floor. (laughter) Poor Miss Singletary, she had to tend to Daddy and Dr. Pollock had to kind of hold me and sew my chin up at the same time. Occasionally, Mother would take me to Dr. Pollock's office, but real often if I had an earache or a sore throat or something like that, Dr. Pollock would come to the house.

DR. PATTERSON: When you had to go to the hospital, or when people had to go to the hospital, where did they go?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, you know, I really don't remember very much about that. There was a New Bern General. I don't remember too much

about that. By the time I came along St. Luke's had been built and most people who had to go to the hospital went to St. Luke's.

DR. PATTERSON: St. Luke's was built a few years before you came along. It was built in 1914.

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh, was it?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, you know, in thinking about it, I think about daddy when he lost his arm. He was in the hospital several days. And I don't know, I don't know whether he was in St. Luke's or whether he was in New Bern General, but he was in the hospital then.

DR. PATTERSON: Folks in those days really felt close to their physicians.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes they did. They really did. It was like a member of the family. It really was. Do you remember that Dr. Pollock had in front of his office a cement bench, and I can remember so well seeing him sitting out there. Doctors were not as busy then as they are now and as they were all during World War II. And I can remember going downtown with mother in the afternoon. She had some findings to buy for her sewing and we would walk downtown and we'd walk by Dr. Pollock's office, he'd be sitting out there in the sunshine and Miss Singletary real often would be sitting with him. Sometimes she wouldn't, she'd be having things to do in the office. But he would be sitting out there, you know he was a very thin man, and he would be sitting out there with his legs crossed. I don't know how in the world he did it, looked like he had his legs wrapped around each other

about three times. He'd be sitting out there when he'd have a little breather. I remember going by there with mother the day that Karen Adams was born, Karen Crawford. And of course a town the size of New Bern news like that got around everywhere, you know, right away, and as we went by mother stopped and said, well, "Dr. Pollock, I hear you have a granddaughter. I hear Emily has a baby." "Oh yes! And what do you think she named her?!" Mother said, "Well, I don't know." "Karen! Karen! Now where do you think she got that name from?! Have you ever heard of that name before?! I've never heard of that name before! Where do you think Emily got that name?! But she said she wasn't going to name one of her children Mary or Elizabeth! She was gonna have a name that everybody else didn't have!" Mother said, "Well, no, I've never heard it before, but I think it's real pretty." (laughter) So Karen Adams is the first Karen I remember. Emily didn't know that within twenty years every other girl child that was born would be named Karen. (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Now this was in front of Dr. Pollock's house and office on Craven Street.

MRS. FRANCIS: No, on Middle Street.

DR. PATTERSON: Sorry, on Middle Street.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes. But, you know, we always felt like he was family friend. I imagine that everybody did about their doctor about that time.

DR. PATTERSON: Frances, this has been a wonderful interview. It really has, and I've certainly enjoyed talking to you. I'd just

like to ask one final thing. How do you think New Bern's coming along these days?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, it's different, Joe Pat. It really is different. I used to as a girl and as a teenager walk downtown and everybody I saw, if I didn't know them I knew who they were, almost everybody unless they had, you know, come in from out in the county of Pamlico County or somewhere. Now, I don't see a lot of people I know, and I go different places and I'm maybe the only native New Bernian in my circle, in my church circle. And I just feel that our church has been richly blessed by many, many people who have come from other places and have been trained real well in stewardship. They give so much more generously than we used to be able to do. Many of them are very talented. They have retired from responsible jobs and they are willing to take on jobs at the church and do them. I think we've been richly blessed by many, many people who have moved here from other places. When I go to circle meetings, as I say I have a circle in which I'm the only one. Before Christmas our circle chairman was giving us the information from the executive board of different services that we could render at Christmas time. She was talking about food for the religious community service and different things like that, and she said, "for the shelter, the homeless shelter. There are a number of things they would like to have and they don't have to be new. Scarves or sweaters or mittens or toboggans", and all those ladies sat up and said, "Toboggans?! Toboggans?!" I didn't realize they refer to them as toboggan caps and we just call them toboggans.

The lady who was chairman was from Ohio I believe she said. She said, "Oh, I forgot to tell you", she said, "down here toboggans are stocking caps." The ladies are saying, "What in the world are the people of the shelter want with toboggans?" I was the only one there who knew what a toboggan was, because to me it is a cap, to them it was a sled, you know. But we just dropped the cap and call it a toboggan.

DR. PATTERSON: Do you think New Bern is faring pretty well with this new influx of people?

MRS. FRANCIS: I think so. I loved your remark at the New Horizon's, that, "The difference between a native New Bernian and an old New Bernian was that a native New Bernian was born here and an old New Bernian was one who said there were too many cars on the street, there are too many people in the grocery store and everything, and it only take three or four years to get to be an old New Bernian", and I think that's right.

DR. PATTERSON: Someone came up later and said it doesn't take that long.

MRS. FRANCIS: But we've grown and we're really quite a little city now, don't you think?

DR. PATTERSON: Yes, I think so. Have you and Chuck been happy out here on the Trent River and Wilson's Creek?

MRS. FRANCIS: We love it out here. We really do. I didn't realize this, how much our children loved it out here until David was at Davidson. When he was a senior at Davidson he was taking a course in creative writing and he and another boy had to do a story together

and illustrate it. He was taking art at the same time. He wrote a story about growing up next to the river and one of the things that he said when I read his story was that he had a Tom Sawyer childhood. It made me feel real good, you know.

DR. PATTERSON: When you all moved out here, I imagine there weren't too many houses along. Now there's no property at all available.

MRS. FRANCIS: No. When we moved out here there was a house next to the bridge on both sides of the road. Then next door to us, the King Laughinghouses had taken a little three room tenant house from Mr. George Scott's farm and had moved it over here and they were living in it next door. They eventually added to it and moved it to another lot out here and built themselves that nice brick house. But when we moved out there, the Scrappy Bell's were living here. Louise and Dan Roberts were building their house, the George Scott's lived next door, we built our house, and then up on the corner, the Gwaltney's had a very small house. They eventually built a larger house in front of it. At that time Jack Aberly had bought most of the lots around this circle and was building these small houses. He built about I guess six or seven little four room houses, which is in a way a shame because the lots are worth more than the houses now. Some of the houses have been added on to and made a little bit larger. In this neighborhood the lots were fairly good size and could have stood a larger house, but most of them were little four room houses.

DR. PATTERSON: I guess in those days people just didn't have

the money to build a large house.

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh no, no, and were just glad to have a new house that was fresh and clean and everything.

DR. PATTERSON: Well, it certainly is beautiful here and I've enjoyed sitting here and just looking out at the moss covered trees.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, I wish you could see it this time of the year when the sun is going down. Now, we won't have this this afternoon because it's overcast. But if it's a nice day, in the late afternoon, down over Francis King's, it turns absolutely red. Friday, particularly this past Friday, it was just beautiful. We had some guests come in for supper. Usually in the late afternoon we close the windows, I mean close the curtains, but it was warm Friday and we left the curtains open and it turns mauve and lavender. Yesterday it was pretty but it wasn't red. It was sort of golden, sort of a golden coral, it didn't turn red. So according to the way the clouds are, it's different colors.

DR. PATTERSON: We see the colors at sunrise over the Neuse River, and of course you remember that when you lived there. We've both lived in the same place at different times. Frances, this has really been fun.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, I've enjoyed it.

DR. PATTERSON: And I thank you for the Memories Program and I thank you for myself. I've really enjoyed it.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, I've enjoyed it too. Chuck said to me last week when I went out to go to circle meeting, I was going to give the

Bible study and then I was going on to one of the Woman's Club meetings and talk to them about what it was like growing up as a little girl in New Bern, and so when I left Chuck said to me, "Have a good time."

I said, "You know I will because I'm gonna do all the talking." That's what I enjoy doing more than almost anything. (laughter)

DR. PATTERSON: Well, you talked a good story today and I found it just fascinating and it brings back my memories too, so thanks a lot.

END OF INTERVIEW