

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

DR. JOSEPH F. PATTERSON, JR.

INTERVIEW 905

This is Dorothy Richardson representing the Memories of New Bern Committee. My number is 900. I am interviewing Dr. Joseph F. Patterson, Jr., interview number 905. This interview is being conducted on August 24, 1992. We are at 604 East Front Street, New Bern, North Carolina.

Dorothy Richardson: Dr. Patterson, what does the F stand for in your name?

Dr. Patterson: It stands for Flanner. That's just an old family name. I'm descended from the Flanner's.

DR: Oh, Flanner's beach.

Dr. Patterson: That's right.

DR: When were you born, Dr. Patterson?

Dr. Patterson: I was born February 12, 1917.

DR: And your birth place?

Dr. Patterson: I was born on Craven Street in New Bern. I think the number now is 508 Craven Street. It used to be called the Waters' house. It's the house just north of the house William Ward lives in at the corner of Change and Craven Street. My brother, Simmons, was born there too. I stayed there till I was six months old, and then we moved to New Street.

DR: Were you born at home?

Dr. Patterson: I was born at home.

DR: Who was the doctor that delivered you?

Dr. Patterson: I'm not sure. It was probably Dr. Robert Jones, my father's partner.

DR: I see. What year now?

Dr. Patterson: Yes.

DR: What were your parents names?

Dr. Patterson: My father was named Joseph F. Patterson, and my mother was Isabelle Gibbs Simmons. She was the daughter of Senator F. M. Simmons and his wife.

DR: Were you related to the Dr. Gibbs?

Dr. Patterson: Yes, we are related. The Gibbs all came from Hyde County, and we're all tied in back there. So, we're cousins.

DR: Were you mother and father from New Bern?

Dr. Patterson: My father was from New Bern. My mother came from Jones County. Her father lived in Jones County until moving to New Bern, but I don't know what year that was.

DR: Brothers and sisters?

Dr. Patterson: I have one brother, F. M. Simmons Patterson, who is three years older than I am.

DR: When you were born, were any relatives living in your home that you remember?

Dr. Patterson: Dorothy, I really don't know about that.

DR: You lived, then, until you were how old on Craven Street?

Dr. Patterson: Six months old. I'm told we moved to New Street.

It was 4 New Street at that time. That's the first house on New Street as you leave East Front Street going west. It's the house right behind the Coor-Bishop house. The house that Mark and Genevieve Dunn lived in for such a long time after my parents sold it to Genevieve's parents.

DR: Did you have many playmates on that street?

Dr. Patterson: Yes. There were a lot of young people who played together. We called ourselves the "East Front Street" boys. There was Billy Dawson, Ben Hurst, Billy Caroon, Stanley Claypoole, Teeny Guerrant, and Herbert Lupton. They were the ones I played with most of the time.

DR: That's interesting, those names. Did you go to kindergarten, Dr. Patterson?

Dr. Patterson: Yes, but I don't know the details of that.

DR: I remember Miss Bessie Hollister had a kindergarten.

Dr. Patterson: I think that's probably where I went.

DR: And Mrs. Gibbs had a kindergarten at one time. But you don't have any memory of that?

Dr. Patterson: I'm not sure.

DR: When you started school, where did you go?

Dr. Patterson: I went to the school on the school green on New Street, New and Hancock Street. I started the first grade there and stayed in the New Bern school system until the tenth grade, and then I left and went to Virginia to preparatory school, Woodberry Forest School. But I have great allegiance to the New Bern school system and consider myself really a member of the Class of 1934.

DR: Do you remember your teachers?

Dr. Patterson: I remember Miss Molly Heath. Everybody remembers Miss Molly. My memories of her, and of all my teachers, are a little vague. But Miss Molly, as I recall, was rather small and a very sweet

lady. In the fourth grade, cousin Louise Bell was my teacher. Miss Lanta Winslow came along later; and Mr. Allston and Mr. Shields.

DR: You had Mr. Alston?

Dr. Patterson: Yes. In civics, I think it was. I don't remember my teachers grade by grade as a number of people I've interviewed remember them.

DR: Mr. Allston was an interesting character.

Dr. Patterson: Uh huh, Frank Allston.

DR: Did he tell you the same story he told all of us about crossing the Atlantic, so many times?

Dr. Patterson: I don't remember that.

DR: We all said he had to end up in Europe. When you went to Woodberry Forest, were there other New Bernians that went at the time you did?

Dr. Patterson: Stanley Claypoole, my friend who lived on East Front Street, had been there one year, and we roomed together the first year I was there. But we were the only two New Bern boys there at that time.

DR: Going back to your school experience in New Bern and having had children in school, do you feel that you received the kind of beginnings that they have had, the quality of education?

Dr. Patterson: I suppose that what we learned wasn't so sophisticated as what people are learning now or in depth or as well rounded; but it seems to me that we were well prepared for the future steps we had to take and for college and for what we had to do. I

think our education had to be pretty sound.

DR: Do you remember how the teachers then handled truancy or discipline problems, or do you remember any of that?

Dr. Patterson: Oh yes, I have some recall about that. I remember that sometimes we would be sent out of the room if we misbehaved. Sometimes we would be kept after school. Sometimes we would be sent home. Sometimes we would be sent out of the room and have to clean the eraser and beat them together and get the chalk dust out of them.

I don't think I ever remember any whippings or physical blows in school. I remember being upgraded very severely by Mr. H. B. Smith on more than one occasion. We were not treated badly. We deserved, I guess, what we got.

DR: Do you feel, Dr. Patterson, that we carried with us to school a certain respect and maybe a little fear of what was expected of us, that we had to toe the mark?

Dr. Patterson: I think we learned that at home. We were brought up that way, to respect our elders and to obey them, and we did go to school with that attitude. I don't recall anytime when any of our teachers were belittled or mocked by any of the students.

DR: When you reached Woodberry Forest, were you excited about going or did you hate to leave?

Dr. Patterson: I don't recall that I was sad about going. I think I was fairly apprehensive going to an entirely new world away from home, and I found it fairly difficult to adjust. I was only there two years before I was through and could go to University in Chapel

Hill. In some ways, those years were fun, and in some years they were, I guess, trying and frustrating. I don't know that I had the greatest time in the world at prep school.

DR: They were smaller classes for you. In your experience in the New Bern schools, do you remember anything about the class size?

Dr. Patterson: In New Bern?

DR: Uh huh.

Dr. Patterson: I would guess that our classes were limited to perhaps twenty students in a room.

DR: At Woodberry Forest, did you have small classes?

Dr. Patterson: There were six forms there and not a lot of boys. I think our classes must of numbered about fifteen, eighteen boys a class.

DR: What subjects were offered there that you probably would not of had the opportunity to have in the New Bern schools?

Dr. Patterson: Latin was taught us very thoroughly, I think, and I'm not sure whether that was given in the tenth and eleventh grades of New Bern. I don't know.

DR: Eighth and ninth.

Dr. Patterson: In the eighth and ninth? Well, I guess I took it and I just don't remember. French was another course; and again, that may have been taught in the New Bern High School, but it was taught very thoroughly at Woodberry, and we became fairly proficient in French. Otherwise, I believe, the subjects were pretty similar.

DR: But more in depth for the other subjects?

Dr. Patterson: Perhaps, yes.

DR: Did you participate in New Bern or at Woodberry Forest in athletics or literary societies?

Dr. Patterson: I never have had great athletic ability, and that's been one of my frustrations all through life. In the New Bern schools I began to be interested in pole vaulting. I was just a little boy then in the lower grades, and I had a bamboo pole around which a rug used to be wrapped. They were the poles we used for pole vaulting in those days. You'd buy a rug and take out the bamboo pole and that was your pole vaulting pole. I would carry that to school with me every day. There was an arrangement there with a barrier to pole vault over and several of us would practice pole vaulting on the school green.

I have a note in a small diary I kept that one day I pole vaulted five and a half feet and one day six feet. I went on with this into Woodberry, and never became a great pole vaulter, but I was a good one. I reached the height of eleven feet at Woodberry, and I did win some points in some of the track meets. So, that was good. In New Bern High, I tried to play baseball. Billy Dawson and I went out for the team our sophomore year. I made the team. I was a second baseman.

The first game we played, I think it was with Vanceboro, a ball was hit to me in the first inning and it went between my legs and I missed it completely. I was taken out of the game, and I never played again.

Jack Tolson, who became a Lieutenant General and a very world famous man, took my place at second base and played the rest of the time.

So, that's about the extent of my athletic career. I like to play

tennis. I like to play golf. I never have been good at either one.

I tried them both at Woodberry. I did get involved in some literary efforts at Woodberry. I was on the school annual and the newspaper.

I was in the finals of a declamation contest but didn't win it.

DR: Do you remember what your piece was?

Dr. Patterson: I don't know who wrote it. It starts out, "We live in two worlds; the world that we can see and feel and touch, and the world that is invisible, intangible, inaudible." I forget who wrote it, and I forget the rest of it.

DR: That's interesting. After you left Woodberry Forest, in the summers when you came home, what kinds of things did ya'll do?

Dr. Patterson: My life was a good life. I wasn't required to work, and I didn't work. I would play. I would play golf at the Country Club. I would go swimming at the beach at Morehead. I would go up to Nags Head to visit friends, and just stay around town and having a good time with the crowd I ran around with.

DR: What were the hangouts, Dr. Patterson?

Dr. Patterson: We mostly went to each other's homes and spent the evenings there. As we got older, we would go to a place on the outskirts of town called "The Beacon" where beer was served and that's where we, I guess, did our early beer drinking. But there weren't many places to go.

DR: Do you remember many of your age group indulging in fast cars and drinking and that kind of thing?

Dr. Patterson: As we went into college, I think all of us began

drinking. At social parties in New Bern during vacation there were times when I think we drank too much, but I don't think we ever got really drunk, we just drank too much for our age groups. We didn't get involved with fast cars and driving too much because there just weren't that many cars. As we grew up, our parents had cars, but we didn't unless we were very lucky. I did get a car when I was about sixteen, but most people didn't have a car. We would borrow our parent's car sometimes, and all of us pitch in a nickel or dime and buy a little gas and we would ride around in the cars. I did have an early car.

We painted it green and called it "The Green Menace." It was a stripped down car with no top. The gas line was so plugged up that the only way we could get gas through sometimes was to blow in the gas tank and build up enough pressure to push gas through. Sometimes we would get dizzy doing this and would have to take turns blowing. But we would ride this old car around town a lot. Billy Dawson was finally given his dad's old car and we would do the same thing. We'd scrounge around

and get a little money from a group of us, and then we'd ride around town. But it wasn't out on the road going fast, it was around town.

The only time I can remember going fast in a car in those days was in Billy Dawson's car coming down Broad Street one day. We had just passed the Craven Street intersection heading east toward the river.

At that time the bridge wasn't there and Broad Street ended right at the river at East Front Street. Ben Hurst said, "I'll bet you can't hit fifty before we get to the corner," and Billy said, "I can," and

he did. He reached fifty miles an hour just as we got to that dead end corner at East Front Street, and he turned to the left on East Front Street and we managed not to turn over. But we all remember it to this day! But that's the fastest trip I took in a car in town when we were driving.

DR: Do you remember during this era, anything that happened in the town that would strike a young person?

Dr. Patterson: When I was a young boy, I was over in my grandparent's house on the corner of New and East Front Street. That's Senator Simmons' house. One night I remember looking out the window facing west and seeing a fire in the sky, and it was Kafer's Bakery burning. Then, as a young boy in 1922, I remember looking out the west window of our home on New Street and seeing a glare in the sky of the great fire of 1922. Those things stayed in my memory.

DR: Did you family evacuate New Bern during that fire?

Dr. Patterson: Almost. My father was a physician, and the sparks were landing on our house way down on New Street near the river. My father thought our house would probably burn, so he said we should leave. We packed up ginger ale to drink and got the silver service and got in our car to leave and drove away. In those days in the back seat of the car behind the driver was a compartment with a lid on it which opened upward to store things in, and we put the silver service in there. I was so frightened that I took the silver service out and I got in that compartment and pulled the lid down over my head. But my father couldn't leave. He knew he was needed, and so we just drove

around I think a few blocks and came back home, and he did what he had to do.

DR: Yes, he always did.

Dr. Patterson: I remember hurricanes in New Bern. I have a number of stories about hurricanes. Would you like me to speak to them?

DR: Yes.

Dr. Patterson: The first hurricane I remember was in 1933. The lights had gone out all over town because there was a bad storm and the water was coming up very high. We were down near the river. My father loved to play cards, and he and Billy Dawson and Ben Hurst and I were playing "Spank Tail Hearts" by candle light in the living room.

Now, Billy lived on East Front Street just beyond the Broad Street intersection. Ben lived almost at the corner of Broad and East Front Street in the old Green house. Well, the storm got so bad that they either decided that they should go home or my father suggested that they go home. So, they did. When they got to the intersection of East Front Street and Broad Street the water was so deep, that's a very low area, as you know, and water always accumulates there - that they swam across the intersection. The next day when the water receded, there were live wires laying all along there, and they would very likely have stepped on those if they had not swum across the street.

DR: That's frightening.

Dr. Patterson: In 1955 when all the storms came in, we were living out on the Trent river, and my mother was living at the corner of East Front and New Street in her father's former home. My wife and I came

down during one of those storms to help her close up the house. We were up in the third floor, the attic, pulling in windows which were on all sides of the attic. You had to reach out and get the window and pull it in. We were pulling in one of the windows facing east.

The wind was coming from this direction. Alice reached out to pull in a window and she got it part way in and a burst of wind came and pulled it back out and pulled her with it. I caught her just as she was going out the window. She was all right, but it was a close call.

During one of those three storms in 1955, my mother stayed with us on the Trent River because it was so bad. Her house was badly damaged by bulwarks from the draw bridge coming through sweeping out the whole furnace under her house and the roof was broken and there was a lot of damage. She wanted to see it the next day, but we couldn't get there because the water was so high. Well, we brought her down to New Street up to about the junction with Short Street, now called Linden Street, and George Dick Baxter who lived there, had a rowboat.

Mother got in that rowboat and George Dick waded through all the water pulling mother. Mother was a very southern lady and this was not quite her thing, but she sat in that rowboat and everybody applauded as she pulled by and as she went down to see her house and the damage in that rowboat. That was a memorable sight. Then later on when we were living in Chapel Hill when I was teaching at the medical school, I had worked one night and had the next day off. There was a hurricane coming straight for Morehead City. I wanted to see this hurricane because I'm fascinated by hurricanes. We had a little VW bug with a sun roof,

and so I came down to see this hurricane. Well, New Bern was involved too. The rivers were very high. We had formerly lived at Trent shores, and I drove back there as far as I could and then got out and waded through all the water and went into Mary and George Bullock's home just to say hello. She had a lot of guest there making some plans for some event, and they were very startled to see me coming out of nowhere. But I continued on to Morehead all by myself. The rain was so hard that it was coming through the sun roof and I had to put a raincoat over me to stay dry. I got about half way down there and it was so bad, the wind was so strong, that I figured I just can't go any further. So, I pulled off the road to turn around and go back.

Just then, a convoy of cars passed me and it was the Governor going down to Morehead to see what was happening. I figured if the Governor could do it, I could to, so I wheeled around and got in his convoy and went on down to Morehead and saw the hurricane and then came back.

DR: What a way to go. That's interesting. Go back to Woodberry Forest. When you left there, what made your choices of where you wanted to go to school?

Dr. Patterson: My father went to the University at Chapel Hill, and my brother was there. I don't guess I ever thought I was going to go to college anywhere except the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and that's where I went. I didn't apply anywheres else. I just went there.

DR: Dr. Patterson, were there scholarships for young people then?

Dr. Patterson: I don't remember that this came up at all when

I was finishing at Woodberry. I possibly could have gotten some scholarship help, but I don't remember that they were even talked about then.

DR: Did you eat on campus, and what dormitory did you live in?

Dr. Patterson: I started out in "Old East" dormitory, and I lived two years in Old East in different rooms. I lived one year in the DKE fraternity house. My senior year I stayed in a private home owned by Mrs. Fred Patterson, no relative but a friend. Her son, Fred, and my brother, Simmons, roomed together at medical school at the University of Pennsylvania. I stayed there rooming with McNeil Smith.

He is a very famous lawyer in Greensboro, with Haughton Ehringhaus whose father was Governor, and with Bill James whose dad was a physician in Hamlet, North Carolina. The four of us roomed together. We had two rooms. We'd sleep in one and supposedly study in the other. It's interesting that when my father was in college at Chapel Hill, he roomed with every one of their fathers.

DR: That is interesting. When you started at UNC, did you know then that you wanted to go into medicine?

Dr. Patterson: I had always felt that I would be a physician. There was never much question about it; never much consideration about anything else. I just grew up with that as my goal without consciously even knowing it, so I just went into medicine very easily.

DR: So, the courses you elected to take were all in that?

Dr. Patterson: All predicated on my becoming a physician and going to medical school.

DR: And it was recognized as UNC with high standards of that kind. When you graduated from the University, you belonged to the DKE fraternity?

Dr. Patterson: Yes. My father did. My brother did. My uncle did, and so, it was natural.

DR: And you were invited?

Dr. Patterson: I was invited.

DR: Anything exciting happen while you were at the University, any memories; particularly professors that you had?

Dr. Patterson: I have forgotten a lot, Dorothy. I remember some events more than I remember professors. I'm not like Ernest Richardson in this regard. He can name every professor he ever studied under.

I did not do much in athletics at Chapel Hill. I did go out for freshman track and I made my numeral in pole vaulting on the track team, but then afternoon laboratories kept me from pursuing that which was probably just well. I've never gone very far in that. I got interested in campus politics and became secretary of the freshman class. As I progressed along, I became involved in a number of other activities on the campus and was elected president of the senior class. Then when we were reaching the end of our senior year, I was elected permanent president of the class. So, I served in that capacity all along and have had a great time with this, and our class has done some very good things.

DR: That is quite something at the University to have that.

Dr. Patterson: I did well scholastically. I studied very hard.

DR: Was it very demanding?

Dr. Patterson: Yes. I found it difficult. It was not an easy time for me, but I don't think it was drudgery either. I was very social at the University. I went to dances. I was in charge of putting on a lot of dances in one of the organizations. I had a lot of fun.

DR: In the Tin Can?

Dr. Patterson: In the Tin Can. We danced at the Tin Can. That was a big tin, athletic gymnasium where the indoor track meets were held and the basketball games. We danced there to big bands and to local bands. We'd decorate the Tin Cans with streamers just like we did tobacco warehouses for those dances.

DR: Would many New Bern boys go to Carolina?

Dr. Patterson: Yes, there were a lot of New Bern boys there. Ernest was one of them. We were classmates while up there. I don't remember seeing a lot of New Bern boys and going around with them. I just met so many new people, and just had a whole world of new friends.

DR: Dr. Patterson, this was at the end of the Depression and when you were beginning to pull out.

Dr. Patterson: I went to Chapel Hill in 1934 and times were hard still. Not for me. I, as I said, had an easy life. My father and mother made my life an easy one, and I rarely wanted for anything.

But I know from talking to classmates and talking to people during our interviews here in New Bern, that it was a very hard time for lots of people. Our class was considered a Depression class, and so many of the folks I knew then and still call good friends, had to work their

way through Chapel Hill. They came there with no money at all and they worked their way through and succeeded. But it was a hard time for a lot of people.

DR: When we're young, I think we have a tendency not to notice around, but were you aware in New Bern of any hard times?

Dr. Patterson: The only thing I remember is we were at Virginia Beach in 1930 or '31 when the banks were closing. My father received word that the New Bern banks were closing and he left in his car and drove as fast as he could and got here just as the doors closed. But the Depression sort of rolled over me. I'm little ashamed of that, but that's the way it was.

DR: At that age, that would not be a fine thing, but I knew that you were of that era and right in it. How was Dr. Patterson paid during those hard years?

Dr. Patterson: I know that a lot of physicians were paid with vegetables and meats and other food items because folks didn't have money, but I can't remember that happening to my father. If he got paid, I think he was paid with money.

DR: When you graduated from Chapel Hill, Carolina did not have a medical school.

Dr. Patterson: Carolina had a two year medical school, and it was a good one.

DR: When you graduated there, how did you decide which school that you would like to attend?

Dr. Patterson: I wanted to go away to a four year school. I

didn't want to stay two years at Carolina or anywhere else and then transfer. I wanted to do it all at one place. I had never been up north very much, and I thought it would be fun to do that. So, I thought of Harvard, Pennsylvania, and Johns Hopkins. They were the three that appealed to me. My brother was at Penn and I had followed him through enough school so that I knew I didn't want to follow him anymore. So, I crossed Penn off, and then I crossed Johns Hopkins off. I had been accepted. I thought that Harvard would just be a wonderful place to go. I had never dreamed that I might go to Harvard or to Boston, but I wanted to, and I did.

DR: It's quite a place. Then, were the admission standards as severe as they are now?

Dr. Patterson: I doubt it, Dorothy. Not as many people applied for one thing. There wasn't this business of thousands of people applying for a hundred positions. I don't know how many did apply, but there was a much smaller group. So, no, I don't think the restrictions were as great.

DR: Was the cost prohibitive?

Dr. Patterson: I don't know. This is one of the things, I say, my life was easy. I never really worried about things like that. I didn't have to work. I think my father must have suffered a great deal putting my brother and myself through medical school, but he never, ever, indicated this at all.

DR: That's nice. The kindness for a child. Going back to New Bern and being a native here, we haven't touched on your religious

background. How was that in New Bern?

Dr. Patterson: I was brought in the Episcopal Church here in New Bern, Christ Church. My parents belonged and that's where I was baptized, and at Woodberry I was confirmed in the Episcopal Church.

I went to Sunday School in the Sunday School room with Mr. George Roberts as my teacher. The thing I remember most about that was we had mite boxes. We got this little cardboard boxes with a slot for coins and we were charged to fill those mite boxes with pennies and nickels and dimes, and we did. I don't know how long it took us, but I've often wondered where they went. But we had a time filling those mite boxes. As a child, I did go to Sunday School. As I grew older, I didn't go to church a lot. I went to Woodberry where I was confirmed into the church. At Chapel Hill, I rarely went to church. In medical school, probably never. Then along came the war and there was no church except for occasional military services that were multidenominal, but I attended anyhow. When I got back home and finished surgical training and we started out in practice, my wife and I had three children. We went to Sarasota, Florida to begin practice. We had three unbaptized children, so we knew we needed to do something. Alice was a Presbyterian and I was still an Episcopalian, and we didn't know what to do. So, we decided we'd go to an Episcopal church one Sunday and a Presbyterian church the next Sunday, and we did this for a while. We found the Presbyterians welcomed us with great, genuine warmth, and we didn't feel that way about our reception at the Episcopal church. So I became a Presbyterian and I've remained Presbyterian, and I've enjoyed being

a Presbyterian. I've had my ups and downs in the church. I've been over zealous sometimes, I think on an emotional high; and then I've let it go, and then I'd go back again. My philosophy is that you keep stepping forward and then you back up, but you don't back up quite so far each time, and then the next step is a little farther down the line, and so it's always getting a little bit better. Here in retirement, I have been fairly active in the Presbyterian church. When we were here in the fifties and I was practicing surgery, I was a deacon and I chaired the Board of Deacons, and that was a really great year for me. I ended up, I think I was chairman of the Deacons of Albemarle Presbytery, but I can't remember much about that. In my most mature years when I can think about things, I have raised many questions in my mind about what it all means and I've had extended talks with our fine Minister, Dr. Richard Boyd. This is where I began interviewing. I would take a tape recorder to these interviews with Rich Boyd and I would ask him questions that were troubling me. I'd tape the whole interview. They would last an hour and a half, and I did twenty of them. I would come home then and transcribe these, have him correct them, and I would correct them, and I would print them on my computer and printer. I put them into a book called Rich Talks, and I've got this progression of an older man with doubts, with questions being asked and answered, going over a two year period. Anyhow, with gradual convictions developing, not completely, but a progression. People have asked me from time to time to send the material to them, and so I ended up with about twenty people to whom I would

send each installment of Rich Talks. This is really a pretty good document. Rich and I have talked about editing it and maybe having it available for people like I have been who have questions. He can't spend all this time with everybody, but I'm an average guy who asked decent questions, and maybe this is a book that might help people.

DR: Getting back to this, your writing, I know in medical school and training, when did you first come interested in expressing yourself in writing? I know you've done some things in writing.

Dr. Patterson: It started in Boston. I had practiced surgery in New Bern most of the time in partnership with my brother Simmons.

Then because of illness I changed into anesthesiology and retrained again at Chapel Hill. This was in 1961 when I was 44. I went to Boston for a year after leaving Chapel Hill for more training at the Boston Children's Hospital. While there, there was a period of time, it lasted for several weeks, not every night but many nights, I would have flashbacks of memory to my childhood days in New Bern, growing up in New Bern. I don't know what prompted it, but they were very vivid.

I would get out of bed and I'd write these memories down, and they were true memories. Sometimes I would write before going to bed because my mind was attuned to New Bern. I ended up with quite a document.

It was based on a diary I had kept when I was thirteen years old in New Bern for several months. I say it petered out in the summer time.

But anyhow, I put this together in a book. I thought I would call it "New Bern Vignettes", but I believe this is really the beginning of the project we are in now. I think it really should of been titled

"Memories of New Bern", and I think that document got me more interested in all of this, and that's why I got interested in this type thing we're doing. But I did write this up as a book. Well, that was one thing, and then after I stopped practicing anesthesia, I was at the medical school in Chapel Hill on the faculty from '66 to '77. I was sixty years old in '77, and I could get state retirement, and I was tired of the medical school and tired of medicine, so I retired, or resigned. We went to the mountains of North Carolina where we had an old farm house that we had had for some years. We worked on it ourselves and lived there. Way back in the hills! We worked so hard.

Alice was tired from teaching at Saxwaphaw near Chapel Hill, and I was worn out from the medical school. After a year of working on this land and this house, we bounced back. We realized we couldn't stay in the hills the rest of our lives. So I joined an organization called the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals based in Chicago and became a physician surveyor. For eleven years we travelled all over the United States and I worked in hospitals everywhere to see if they were operating by acceptable standards. We had a trailer and a pick-up truck.

DR: The children were grown then.

Dr. Patterson: We had two dogs with us, two big dogs, and they'd travel with us; John Brown and Beau. We travelled all over the country.

I worked in military hospitals overseas too, so we went to many foreign countries to do the same things.

DR: What were some of the foreign countries?

Dr. Patterson: Well, let's see. We went to Berlin to do an Army hospital there. We went to Wiesbaden to the Air Force Hospital near Frankfurt. We went to Paris to the American Hospital. We did a lot of hospitals in Puerto Rico. We went to Yokosuka, Japan, went to Guam.

When we took these trips abroad, I would have vacation time, and we would use that to travel in other areas. We ended up going to all the Scandinavian countries in a rented car. We went to Australia to see our son who was working there. We went to China, and we visited Okinawa where I had been a medical officer during the battle in World War II. I had to go back to see Okinawa. So, we went to lots of places.

But anyhow, talking about writing. On these trips, I worked very hard during the day in the hospitals, and at night time I had reports to fill out, so it was a busy time, and I would get fatigued. Alice said, "I'm gonna do most of the driving. That's the part I can contribute," and so she did. I would sit in the passenger's seat and she would drive. I started writing poetry about things I remembered and about things we saw. I also kept a diary. I got seven huge volumes of notes of over the first years of these trips. But I began writing poetry, and I got interested in that. That's how poetry writing started, and I've continued that. Since then, I've got lots and lots and lots of poems, and I'm still writing them.

DR: Have you consider writing a book, a novel?

Dr. Patterson: Well, I've published two books of poetry locally. I paid for the printing, and they have been sold locally. I'm working on a third one which I hope I can distribute beyond New Bern. I don't

know that I'll every write a novel, but I suppose I have enough material for one. It takes so much time.

DR: And your time is filled.

Dr. Patterson: Right now.

DR: Dr. Patterson, let's go back to your family; your wife and your children. Where did you meet Alice?

Dr. Patterson: When I finished medical school, I interned at a hospital called Abington Memorial Hospital which is not far outside of Philadelphia. This was war time. This was 1943. I was already in the Army reserve, and I knew I would be going into the service.

We were told that we had to complete our internship in nine months instead of twelve because physicians were so badly needed, so that's the way the internship was set up. Well, I had been there only a few months when I met this young girl who was eighteen years old who was secretary to the pathologist, and that was Alice. We hit it off immediately. I was seven years older than she, and it didn't take us long to know that we wanted to get married. She was so young that to get the marriage license, I had to get a notarized statement from her mother. We got married in March, just a few months after we started going together, and just a week before my internship was to end. Well, along about that time, the Army came back and said, "Look, we've changed our plans. You have to have a years internship and not nine months, and if you don't have a year, you'll go in as a Private."

DR: This was in surgery?

Dr. Patterson: This was a rotating internship before I entered

training as a surgeon. This was right after medical school. So, all of us had to find three more months. I found a job through Alice's boss, who was the pathologist at the hospital, I was taken into the office of a very well known gastroenterologist in Philadelphia and worked in his office and with him for three months and got credit for it. Alice and I got married in March and we finished the internship, finished my job in Philadelphia and were immediately ordered to California. I'm sorry, we went from internship to Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. That's the town, Carlisle. That was the Medical Officer's Field Training School. That's where I had basic training for about six weeks. Then we were sent to California, to Riverside which is south of LA to an anti-aircraft camp named Camp Haan which was right across the road from March Air Force Base. Camp Haan is gone now. We've been back and there's nothing there except concrete slabs. But it was a huge anti-aircraft camp at that time, and I was a battalion surgeon for 850 men in a 40mm gun outfit. Well, I had never really roughed it in my life. My parent's wouldn't let me. They didn't think I was strong enough. But I soon learned how.

DR: Was Alice able to go with you?

Dr. Patterson: Alice was with me in Riverside, and she became a nurse's aide. She studied to become a nurse's aide and worked in the military hospital. I spent most of my time in the middle of the Mojave Desert with my battalion on maneuvers and gun practice. I stayed in the Mojave Desert eight months. We slept on the ground with the scorpions and rattlesnakes and tarantulas out there. I'd see Alice

on weekends when I could get home. We maneuvered up and down the California coast, and then the time came for things to change. Alice was pregnant then, and she finally came home all by herself on troop train. She was about eight months pregnant. It took a long time, and she didn't have anything. She was all by herself. She said the soldiers would get her food and bring it to her in the train. She was stranded in Chicago for a while, but she got home and it all worked out all right. I, shortly after that, shipped out for the Pacific area.

DR: Where were you?

Dr. Patterson: I had been transferred to a 90mm anti-aircraft gun outfit, and we went to Oahu and stationed our guns around the island in various places. I was a battalion surgeon again for the same size unit. We stayed there for maybe six or seven months. Then I was able to effect a transfer. I was tired of being a battalion surgeon. It was not a very rewarding type thing. I had a medical detachment of twenty men whom I trained. I trained them in first aid and in medications. I'd station two men with each company and keep the rest in the aid station area. The two men with the companies would provide first Echelon treatment. If something were more serious, they'd bring them to me. I did soldiers suturing or examinations and so forth.

I held sick call every morning for the whole battalion. If the corpsmen in the companies couldn't take care of the sick call there, they would come to me. If I couldn't take care of them, I'd take them to Tripler Hospital on Oahu. I also was responsible for sanitation. Well, first,

my corpsmen were responsible for their company, and they would oversee the latrines and the dining room, but I made very frequent inspections of all these facilities and all the battalions. I had to make sure the latrines were proper and the kitchens were clean and the men were clean. I had to do physicals on the men frequently. We would go to a place called Kadena on the coast for gun practice, and we went for jungle training. It was an interesting life, and a fun sort of time on Oahu. We would go down to Waikiki on weekends and stay at the Moana hotel and go swimming. But it also wasn't the most rewarding thing I've ever done. So, I got myself transferred to a field hospital.

That's like the MASH hospitals. It was a prototype of the MASH hospitals, and we headed for Okinawa. We got there about a month after D-Day. As soon as we could, we set up our hospital, a tent hospital.

I was with a bunch of surgeons. I didn't know a lot of surgery, but I became attached to a senior surgeon who was very good. Before our hospital was set up, it was raining terribly and it was a bad time.

He and I, with two or three corpsman, were sent to other field hospitals. We worked in field hospitals in other areas of the island until ours was established, and then we had our own busy time with casualties. So, I stayed on Okinawa through the battle.

DR: Dr. Patterson, was that a real traumatic experience for you?

Dr. Patterson: Yes, it was terrible. I handled it all right, but the wounded were very badly wounded. The shift I worked on was from midnight to noon. We worked twelve hour shifts, and we were busy operating. I was operating then the whole time. Then we would take

care of our patients in the wards in the tents when we were through operating. So, it was a very busy time, and a very bad and sad time.

But we all handled it, I thought, very well. I have had friends, medical school classmates, the people I was with in Carlisle, who told me some terrible things that happened to them as battalion surgeons in the Battle of the Bulge and in other places. There were some more gruesome than the things I saw, but we did all right. Then I was transferred to a neuro-surgical team when the battle was over, and we went to Korea as occupation troops. I was immediately sent to a place called Yung Dung Po where I was the only medical officer to care for all of the troops coming into Korea and all of the troops shipping out of Korea to go home. I stayed there for several months doing that.

Then I got back to a field hospital in Seoul and stayed with them a while. Then my father was sick, and Congressman Barden helped get me home. I didn't feel badly about that. I didn't have enough points for discharge, but I had been through a lot, and I didn't feel that it was wrong for me to come home. My father needed me, and he wasn't doing well. I had a few more months to serve. I was stationed in Columbia, South Carolina at Fort Jackson, a huge camp, on the surgical service. And because everybody above me got out of the Army, I became chief of the surgical service in this huge hospital at Fort Jackson, and I didn't know any surgery to speak of. I had had combat experience on Okinawa and some surgical training as an intern, but I was in no position to be chief of a surgical service. But I was. So, I called on the civilian surgeons in Columbia to come help me, and we did just

fine. Then, I got out.

DR: After the war, then you went back to school?

Dr. Patterson: When I went in service, my mind was made up that I was going to be an internist, an internal medicine type person. That suited the way I am. I would have made a good internist I think.

But I got so involved with surgeons during the war and combat tragedies and trauma, that I decided to be a surgeon. It seemed as if every young medical officer in the service wanted to be a surgeon after the war was over, and everybody wanted an appointment to learn surgery.

Here I was, stuck overseas for months after the war was over, and when I got home, there was nothing to be had. Through dad's help and his connections I got an appointment in Richmond, Virginia to the Medical College of Virginia as an assistant resident on the neuro-surgical service. I didn't want to be a neuro-surgeon, but this would give me credit, and I had to do something. So, we spent a year, Alice and I and Priscilla, she was our only child then, living in very scroungy places in Richmond. We didn't have any money.

DR: Your income was terrible.

Dr. Patterson: I got \$50 a month from the GI Bill and I think maybe \$25 a month from the hospital. It was a hard, hard time, and I worked terribly hard. Then I got an appointment in surgery the next year in Philadelphia at the Lankenau Hospital. I stayed there three years and became a qualified surgeon. They were hard years; no money, and I worked very hard. When it was finished, we thought we wanted to live in Sarasota, Florida. I had been down there and it was so

beautiful. So, I took the exams, passed them, and we moved to Sarasota, and I set up practice. It didn't work out. I didn't do very well, and I missed North Carolina. So, an opportunity developed in Albemarle near Charlotte. I came up there and joined two other surgeons and we set up the Albemarle Surgical Clinic. That did very well. But I'd only been there a year when Dr. Oscar Kafer died in New Bern.

DR: What year was that?

Dr. Patterson: That was in 1951. I was called by Emmet Whitehurst, a lawyer here, a good friend. He called me and said, "Oscar Kafer's death has left a void in surgery in New Bern and we need you to come back here." Well, I always missed New Bern, of course, and so I came.

DR: I meant to ask you, Dr. Patterson, what is it about New Bern that all of us almost felt compelled to come back?

Dr. Patterson: New Bern is a very special place. Now, I can be objective and say that because I have traveled all over the United States in big cities and small towns and I have seen the true sampling of this country. Alice and I have each said many times that if we did not know anything about New Bern, had never been here before, and we came here to this town to survey a hospital or to visit, we would say, "That's where we want to live. That's the nicest place we've seen in the whole United States."

DR: Why? I've tried to put my finger on it. I was raised here.

Dr. Patterson: I think the water has a great deal to do with it. Water on three sides. When we grew up, it was such a quiet, beautiful town, the trees and all, and it still is. The history of

the town and the feeling of oneness that we all had when we grew up.

I've written a poem. I call it "The Old Crowd". I talk about going to funerals when one of the old folks has passed away, and the same people are there every time. I call it "The Old Crowd" and say we have stuck together from the beginning and we're still together, and we're going to stay together until the last one of us is here.

DR: It's really an intangible, but it's real!

Dr. Patterson: Yes. I think the new people are bound to feel this. That's why they came. They come and see this place and they're attracted to it immediately; the beautiful houses, the quietness, the people are nice to them, the rivers, the boats, the climate. But I've heard more nice things about the way they're treated by the people than anything else.

DR: Dr. Patterson, do you remember when we used to swim at Dr. Hand's and Crabby's, and we had to push the offal and feces away. Do you remember that?

Dr. Patterson: Yes. I remember Dr. Hand's cabin at the foot of Johnson Street where the bridge use to be. We would go there and do just what you said, we would swim. Later, that became a scout troop.

I forget the number of it. That was where they had their headquarters. But Dr. Hand's gang was a place where we had parties and we would swim. Crabby's on South Front Street was a great place for young people. For a long time, it seemed to me that the South Front Street boys, like Ecky and Bucky Meadows and Johnny Mitchell and Andy Fuller and that crowd, were the ones who populated Crabby's. Crabby was a little

machinist person. He had this place where he just fixed up a room for all of us. I finally became a member of Crabby's and we would swim down there. I remember how polluted the waters were, and I said that none of us ever needed any typhoid shots if we survived that.

Billy Hand says none of us ever required polio shots if we all survived that.

DR: How about that. Because maybe we became immune, our systems became immune. We were happy.

Dr. Patterson: Yes. But swimming in the river was fun.

DR: Oh yes!

Dr. Patterson: I think the greatest thing that's needed in this town now is a place for young people to swim. You can talk about anything else, but what's needed is a place for kids to swim. They go down to the foot of Johnson Street here all the time now and swim. It's a little dangerous, the channel's not far out, and people have drowned there. But everyday in the summer, they are down there. It wasn't but two or three years ago that I used to go down there most every morning and go swimming too. Sometimes, early in the morning before anybody got up, I would go down there by myself and swim, and it was wonderful.

DR: That's interesting. Getting back to your returning to New Bern. When you returned to New Bern, how many children did ya'll have then, Dr. Patterson.

Dr. Patterson: We had four children when we came back to New Bern.

DR: What are their names?

Dr. Patterson: Priscilla is our oldest, Priscilla White. She is 48 now. Then, Deborah, Deborah Simmons; and then our son, Joe Pat.

The three of them were born in Philadelphia. All of them were born and delivered by my former Chief of Obstetrics who was a great friend.

Then young Alyce who had her named changed from Alice legally when she was at Chapel Hill because she didn't want to be named the same name as her mother. She would reverse that now she said if she could.

She was born in Albemarle, so she was just a baby when we came to New Bern. That's all the children we planned to have. That's all we had. Alice did have one miscarriage along the way. We were very lucky. Our kids are all healthy, happy, and great children.

DR: How many grandchildren do you have, Dr. Patterson?

Dr. Patterson: We have eight. Priscilla in Greensboro has two teenage girls. The first one, the oldest, is a freshman at Carolina.

The next one is just a year and a half younger. Debbie lives in Iowa and she has three children; a fifteen year old boy, a thirteen year old boy, and an eleven year old girl. Wonderful children! Joe Pat lives in London and works in London. He is not married. Young Alyce is married and she has three children. They are 8, 6, and 4. They live in New Jersey. All of them are great grandchildren. Everyone of them is healthy and bright and beautiful!

DR: Great.

Dr. Patterson: Very lucky people.

DR: Blessed.

Dr. Patterson: Yes.

DR: When you and Alice came back, Alice wanted to come too?

Dr. Patterson: Yes, she loved New Bern. I don't recall there was ever any hesitation about coming back. There never was any resistance on her part to go any place we went. She was happy to go.

DR: Wherever thou goest. Tell me about how you set up when you came back to New Bern.

Dr. Patterson: When we came to New Bern, I'll say again, we were broke. My father ended up really without much of anything. He was not well, and he had spent so much money on his family, so there wasn't any inheritance to speak of. I had been in the war and been through four years of post war training to get my surgical training. I had been to Florida to set up, and it didn't work out. I spent a year in Albemarle getting all set up and didn't make much money that year.

So when I came to New Bern, we were really pretty hard up. We rented a little house out in Green Park. I had talked to my brother, Simmons, who was practicing surgery in Laurinburg, about coming back to New Bern and working together. He had been in Laurinburg a number of years, but he was anxious to come back to New Bern. So, he said, "Yep, we'll do it." He couldn't leave as soon as I could, so I came back and got things going. We found an office on Broad Street above the City Barber Shop. It was in a little brick building right next to the Clark Building at the corner of Middle and Broad Street on the northwest corner. Mr. Clark, who had the drug store, had built a little brick building next to it with the barber shop on the first floor, and the upstairs

floor. He converted into offices for Simmons and myself.

DR: What year was that, Dr. Patterson?

Dr. Patterson: That was 1952. Frank Hammond had an office then right next to us in an old wooden building. I've been told it was Dr. Primrose's former office. Our office was a pretty decent place.

It was small, and the stairs were a disadvantage, but I don't remember any of our post-operative patients who couldn't make it. Broken legs or whatever, they all got up those steps.

DR: Equipping an office is a terrible expense.

Dr. Patterson: I can't remember the details of that, but the surgical supply people would allow you to get equipment and pay them on time, and that's what we did. I equipped the office before Simmons came. We got the things we needed. It wasn't a whole lot really.

There were instruments and some examining tables. There wasn't a great deal. We didn't have a laboratory there. We didn't have any x-ray facilities. We just did suturing and examinations and some office gynecology. We knew we needed to have a better place, so we got Bobby Stephens, the architect who was a friend, and we got a corner lot out on Rhem Avenue where Rhem Avenue and Trent Boulevard come to a point.

It's right next to Mary Mullineaux's house.

DR: That's Rhem Avenue and Trent Blvd.

Dr. Patterson: That's right. It's a corner lot shaped like a long thin piece of pie. We thought we'd put a building up there. I canvassed all the neighbors and talked to them about it, and they said it would be all right. So, we built the Patterson Surgical Clinic,

a very fine office building. It's still there. It's passed through hands more than once, but it's still just a very fine building. We moved out there. Later, Dr. Larry Erdman joined us, and we enlarged the clinic. So, three of us practiced surgery then. It was a very fine place. We were doing all right, but it was a hard life in New Bern in those days as a physician, particularly as a surgeon. There were three hospitals here; Good Shepherd, Kafer, and St. Luke's, so we had patients in all three. There were three emergency rooms, and there were no emergency room physicians. So, anything that came in during the night had to be taken care of by the physicians in town.

It was anything related to surgery or laceration of any size, the surgeons were called. Simmons and I were taking call every other night and every other weekend. We would be up most of the night in the emergency rooms and operate all day the next day. When we finally got home, we were really too tired to be members of the family, and it was just a very hard time. I got sick. I developed a bleeding ulcer and a back problem. I had to have back surgery and I had to have an emergency gastrectomy, stomach removal. After that, I continued to have hemorrhages when I would get stressed too much. So, in 1961, it became very obvious that I had to make a change. I had in the meantime, since my gastric surgery, dropped out of the clinic because I couldn't carry my end of the load. I set up practice of my own in surgery in Freda Sultan's house on the first floor at the corner of Broad Street and Metcalf, the southeast corner. I did reasonably well but not really well. I wasn't fully operational, so

I quit. I gave up surgery and decided that I wanted to stay in the operating room and that I would be an anesthesiologist. So, in 1961, we picked up lock, stock, and barrel and moved to Chapel Hill, and I started all over again. Priscilla stayed with Simmons and Ruth and finished her high school senior year. We lived in a little apartment in Chapel Hill. We were still broke.

DR: With three children?

Dr. Patterson: With three children. We stayed there for two and a half years while I finally made my way through the anesthesiology residency; then went to Boston for a year; then to Baltimore for two years; and then joined the faculty at Chapel Hill. That's when our lives starting coming up. I didn't make a lot of money, but we began to see the light and things got better from then on. We had fun all during these years, but we didn't have a lot of things.

DR: With four children to educate.

Dr. Patterson: They were all in college at Chapel Hill at the same time, and Alice was there too! Alice had never been to college.

When we were in Baltimore, she decided she wanted to go to college, so she went for one year to a community college. When we moved to Chapel Hill, the University gave her credit for it, and she went to Carolina for three years while she was taking care of our house and four children. They were all there together, and I was teaching in the medical school. So, we were all at the University, and we were named "The most all university family in the history of the school."

All six of us were there together!

DR: Amen!

Dr. Patterson: Now, I've got a picture showing the award being given to us as "The All Carolina Family". We all made it. Alice did so well. She was seventeenth in her class of two or three thousand and Phi Beta Kappa, and just a remarkable achievement.

DR: You spotted that immediately, didn't you?

Dr. Patterson: I knew she would do well.

DR: Getting back to practicing in New Bern, who were some of the doctors here?

Dr. Patterson: I have tried to get that straight in my mind. These are the ones that I remember; some of the older people here who were contemporaries of my father; Dr. Harvey Wadsworth, Dr. Christopher Barker, Dr. Richard Duffy, and Dr. Charles Ashford. Now, they had been here for a long time. Dr. William Hollister had come here from being a missionary in China and he was in practice when I came back. Ernest Richardson was here. I think he came in '48 or there about.

DR: '49.

Dr. Patterson: He and I are contemporaries. William Willis was here, and I think Dr. Ernest Bender was still here in pediatrics. I believe he was still in the Elk's Temple building, but I'm not positive about that.

DR: I know he had an office in Pollocksville or moved down there.

Dr. Patterson: Yes. He's from Pollocksville and he came to New Bern and he went back to Pollocksville. His son, Ernest, I'm going

to interview when he comes back to town. I think they were the white doctors in New Bern. I didn't remember the black doctors too well. I didn't ever get to know them very well.

DR: Even working at Good Shepherd?

Dr. Patterson: Yes. I didn't see them. I saw a Dr. Littman some, and I think Dr. Holt some, but I never really got to know them. There were only about three of them here.

DR: Dr. Patterson, the three hospitals that were here; Kafer, St. Luke's, and Good Shepherd, were they adequately equipped and staffed?

Dr. Patterson: Well, let's start at St. Luke's. St. Luke's was built in 1914 by my father and Dr. R. D. V. Jones. They were partners. They built this really fine hospital for those times at the corner of George Street and Broad Street. The building of course is still there and the social service people have just left. It was the first fire proof building in North Carolina. That was one of three hospitals when I came back. In those days, when I came back in the early fifties, I thought the hospital was adequately equipped. It had an x-ray machine. Nothing to brag about now, but it was all right.

DR: For the time.

Dr. Patterson: For the time. The laboratory was a very small one room affair.

DR: Do you remember who worked in that laboratory?

Dr. Patterson: Thelma Lewis, who was then Thelma Chinnis, was the first lab technician in New Bern. Then, Teeny Henderson came along

when Thelma stopped. Frances Pittman worked there and at Kafer. St. Luke's had two operating rooms on the third floor in the front south end of the building; a small room for more minor cases and a large, well illuminated, and equipped operating room. We had good things to work with. The big trouble when we came was anesthesia. The only anesthesia that was available was open drop ether. Miss Lou Justice, who had been giving open drop ether as long as I guess as I had lived, I don't know, gave this.

DR: A real professional.

Dr. Patterson: She was really a great anesthetist.

DR: She was an example to me of what a real professional was.

Dr. Patterson: Yes, Miss Lou knew her job very well, but that's all she could do was use open drop ether. That plus spinal anesthesia was all that was available. The emergency room at St. Luke's was in the basement. It had two beds in there, and it was a well equipped emergency room. I felt that St. Luke', the Sisters were running it then, the Catholic Sisters of St. Joseph, I thought that they did a good job and it was a good hospital.

DR: When did they take over St. Luke's? Do you remember, Dr. Patterson?

Dr. Patterson: It was in the forties in the early days of the war. Dr. Jones had died and my father wasn't well, and the hospital had been enlarged early in the war because there were so many patients coming up from Camp LeJeune. My father had a workman's compensation contract with the workers at Camp LeJeune, and they would all come

to St. Luke's if they needed hospital care or fairly detailed medical care. There was a doctor stationed at Camp LeJeune who would provide the first level of care, but he would send the more serious cases up to St. Luke's. There was an ambulance run back and forth. The government helped, as I remember, to put this addition on. So, it became quite a sizeable hospital. Dad wasn't well, and it was too much for him. So, it was sold to the Sisters I think about '43, '44, and dad moved out. He had an office across the street on Broad Street in the first floor, what had formerly been the nurses home next to the Waldrop house on the corner.

DR: How long did the nurse's training school operate there?

Dr. Patterson: I don't know. That had stopped before I came back to practice, and as a young man, I don't remember that. It was in operation for a number of years, and it produced some very fine nurses. Annie Humphrey makes a point of saying that, "None of them ever failed the nurse's state examinations."

DR: Your father started that, didn't he?

Dr. Patterson: Yes, he started it. All of the doctors in practice then played a role in teaching the nurses different things.

DR: That was quite a service to New Bern, and it must of grown, because then women didn't have many acceptable careers such as nursing and teaching.

Dr. Patterson: I think Annie Humphrey is one of them who came from a distance to do this, and they stayed here for the most part. They were nurses who were very active when Simmons and I came back

to New Bern. I've jotted down the names of some of them; Annie Humphrey was almost like a member of our family, Tiny McKee, and Rowena McSorley.

Ida Lancaster was here. I don't know whether she went to this nursing school, but Ida was here and was a very fine nurse all through the era. Jean Harris, I think Jean went to the nursing school. Smitty Bartling. Some others nurses, whether they went to the school here, I don't know. Alberta Bagley married Mr. McCosley who owned the barber shop below the office, D. L. McCosley. Well, Bagley was chief of the operating room area when I grew up in New Bern. Dad just loved her to death. He relied on her completely. Bagley stayed on, and she later worked for Simmons and myself in our office. Bagley was a great friend of ours through the years. Ida Piggot who was another nurse at St. Luke's when I came back. I think she was in a supervisory position. Dorothy Ritchy was here and she became chief of nurses at Oscar Kafer's hospital. Hildred Harrison and Miss Lou Justice. Kathleen Edwards was another fine nurse who went off finally to anesthesia school and became a nurse anesthetist. Jessie Coats. Jessie was a well trained anesthetist and she helped the situation in New Bern a great deal. Miss Sledge was dad's superintendent of nurses in the earlier years. I remember her as a very strict disciplinarian. She wasn't here when we came back. There is another lady I remember well who was not a nurse, Madie Bell Hay who was a secretary at St. Luke's. She was secretary for both Dr. Jones and my father.

DR: Dr. Patterson, back then, how did people pay for their hospitalization?

Dr. Patterson: In my days of practice, they had insurance; Jefferson Standard or Jefferson Pilot.

DR: But in your father's day, do you remember?

Dr. Patterson: I don't know. I really don't know how that was handled. I think it was mostly cash.

DR: I remember when my mother was sick, and I remember Rich talking about his mother and bills. I don't know. I thought about that.

Dr. Patterson: I don't remember either. I don't remember my father ever having a bad time filling out insurance forms or forms. He never complained about it. I just sort of feel that most of it was cash transaction.

DR: When you came back and opened your practice here, you could operate with maybe a secretary and your nurses. You didn't have to have that huge bookkeeping.

Dr. Patterson: No. In our office we ended up in the administrative part with two girls who did the secretarial work and handled the charts and all. I believe we just had one nurse, and we did all right. Let me get to Kafer Hospital. When I came back, Kafer Hospital was in the old John Jones home on Broad Street next to the Barker apartments.

It was a fine old colonial home with columns on the front. Just a beautiful southern home. Oscar Kafer had added to the back of it an extension which contained about six private rooms. A brick extension, and they were decent rooms. When I got back, as you walked in the front door of this building, this beautiful home, on the left hand side was a big ward for men. I don't know whether it had been one

room or whether it had been enlarged, but it was quite a sizeable room.

It take maybe eight or ten men patients. On the opposite side, the right, as you came in, was a similar area for women. The private rooms were in the back and then the extension. I don't remember any private rooms in the main building, but I may be wrong. The one operating room was upstairs in the rear. I can't remember what was in the front part upstairs. Perhaps there were rooms up there. I just don't remember. There was one x-ray machine in the basement. The emergency room was a small room of one bed in the basement, and the laboratory was in the basement. It was a small operation, but a fair amount of work was done there. Helen Kafer was running the hospital. Oscar was dead. Helen had come in I think without much experience of running a hospital, but she had to do it.

DR: She was a social worker.

Dr. Patterson: She worked very hard. The business manager was Eliza Ellis Turner. I knew her so well. She lived up on East Front Street up near the bridge. She died just recently. A lot of work was done at Kafer Hospital.

DR: Did you practice there too?

Dr. Patterson: I was on the staff of all three hospitals, and most of us in town were. As I mentioned, the emergency rooms made it difficult for us. When I left town in '61, Kafer Hospital was still operational, but it folded up as Kafer Hospital soon after that as I understand. Good Shepherd Hospital was quite operational when I came and had been here for some time. Mr. O. T. Faison was the

administrator, and he did a very good job as administrator. I was unaware of it at the time; in fact, I was unaware of this for all of the hospitals in town, that the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals did come to New Bern and survey these hospitals. Although, I spent eleven years with them later, I don't remember them in New Bern earlier. Mr. Faison brought his hospital up to the level where it was accredited by the Joint Commission, and that was quite an accomplishment.

DR: Yes, absolutely. Was he supported, Good Shepherd? Did it make it's own way or did it have to have outside help to operate?

Dr. Patterson: It was supported by the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, and that's where it got a lot of its money as well support from other organizations. In Mr. Faison's interview which I had with him, he mentioned how small the charges were. They didn't really make enough money to pay their own way. It was a very busy place. It was staffed by black nurses, by black operating room anesthetists and nurses, and of course all the patients were black. I had a lot of work out there. I worked in the emergency room many a long night with very bad injuries. The operating room was decently equipped. Again, in the early days, all they knew was open drop ether, but that got better as time went by. Two of the most difficult operations I did while I did surgery in New Bern, most involved, were done at Good Shepherd Hospital, and they worked out all right. It was very hard practicing in three hospitals in this little town. It was just too much.

DR: Did all the doctors practice in each hospital?

Dr. Patterson: I don't know that everybody in town was on the staff at Kafer Hospital, or maybe not everybody at all of the hospitals.

Simmons and I were on all three staffs, and most of us were. Dr. Lula Disosway came in as the medical director at Good Shepherd, and I think that was a God send for them. She not only directed things, but she helped with the clinical care and filled in when they had trouble getting other doctors. So, Dr. Lula did a decent job out there too.

DR: After World War II, Dr. Patterson, things got easier really for doctors because of the advances that had been made for some things, hadn't they?

Dr. Patterson? I don't know that things got easier. I think that was the beginning of life getting, in a sense, more complicated for doctors because so much was learned; particularly, in the surgical area. Things got better for patients. The need for recovery areas after surgery was recognized, and that developed. We didn't have that during the war in Okinawa. Every patient we operated was sent right back to their cot in the tent, and that was true in the early days in New Bern in the hospitals here when I came back. Proper care, trauma was improved.

DR: Medications; penicillin, sulphur.

Dr. Patterson: That all came along, perhaps speeded up by the war. Anesthesia developed. Pentothal became useful, and the use of endotracheal tubes, putting breathing tubes into windpipes for ventilation, and respirators. These things we didn't have before.

DR: In New Bern, do you remember when midwives were used? Not in your day.

Dr. Patterson: Only One time did I had any experience with midwives, I knew they were here, but I didn't know much of the details.

One day about 1954, I guess it was, a black midwife brought in a black newborn baby to Good Shepherd. The baby had just been born. She had delivered it at home. The baby had a congenital defect of the lower spine called spina bifida, a ruptured maningomyelocoele, is another word for it; the membranes were opened and spinal fluid was leaking out of the spinal cord and it was exposed. This was a life threatening thing. The baby was alive. They called me. I had to solve the problem.

I didn't think there was anyway the child could be sent to a medical center. The child had to be operated on. I had seen these operations done when I was in neuro-surgery in 1946 in Richmond. I remembered as best I could and got some books out and looked it up and we operated on that baby under open drop ether and repaired the defect, and the baby survived. I think probably it had a lot of troubles later, but the first bad obstacle was overcome. But that's the only time I remember a midwife.

DR: I imagine they were both black and white midwives.

Dr. Patterson: Probably. I just don't remember. I know that the white physicians would deliver babies at home. I was born at home.

Ernest Richardson tells me that when he came back in '48 or '49, that most of the babies were born at home. The doctors would go and give a little chloroform at home.

DR: Did social services have any funds for medical care? Do you remember?

Dr. Patterson: I don't remember, Dorothy.

DR: I just wondered how people were cared for back then.

Dr. Patterson: At home, you mean?

DR: Well, I remember the poor house. Do you remember that, Dr. Patterson?

Dr. Patterson: Yes. It was out there where the county hospital is now. The county home.

DR: Daddy had a cousin and Aunt Mamie used to take me out to see him. He'd be sitting out in a rocker.

Dr. Patterson: I don't think I went out there very much, if I went out there at all. As far as care in the hospitals were concerned, the usual thing in those days was to have private nurses. In the fifties, if patients could afford this, and somehow most people seemed to be able to, they would have private nurses taking care of them before and after surgery. At first, these nurses were on twelve hour schedule; later, they cut it to eight hours. I don't know what they charged. But it wasn't uncommon for them to have nurses around the clock, and when they went home, to continue with these nurses oftentimes.

DR: Did you ever make house calls?

Dr. Patterson: Yes. I made house calls from a surgical standpoint. I didn't do anything but surgery. I did not do general practice. Some of our patients just weren't able to come to the office, and we did not send them to the emergency room and say I'll meet you

at the emergency room. We went to see them! If someone was a post-operative patient and had to have his incision redressed and he was just too sick to come to the office, we'd go to his house and do the change of dressing. We'd take all of the stuff with us. I remember going out to Mrs. Ziegler's house a number of times. Her husband had trouble with his feet. We had no podiatrist, and he had to have foot care, nail care. So, I would go out periodically and provide the foot care that he needed. If somebody had a colostomy that needed to be dilated, and that's means putting your fingers in there and dilating it, and it was difficult for them to come to the office, we'd go by their house and do it. Sometimes if somebody just was sick at home and you didn't know what was wrong with them, they would call and say my husband is really sick, we'd go see him if at the home and say he needs to be in the hospital. But we made house calls, all of us.

DR: What did you charge, Dr. Patterson?

Dr. Patterson: We probably charged five dollars for a house call. An office visit was five dollars, perhaps. If we had a patient with a fractured ankle, we might charge them fifty dollars for the care of that. That would include changing the cast in the office, several times if necessary, putting on walking irons. We would charge seventy-five dollars for an appendectomy, and one hundred and twenty-five dollars for a gall bladder operation. If we charged anybody \$500, it was for some tremendous amount of care which would included hospitalization for weeks. I don't think we ever charged anybody over \$500 for anything, and that was an enormous amount of money even then.

DR: Was it the same for the other surgeons in New Bern like Dr. Ashford?

Dr. Patterson: I think we all did the same. I don't know that we compared prices a lot, but I think we sort of knew what was going on. We were probably all pretty competitive. None of us made a lot of money. Medicine was not a terribly rich profession in those days. You could work very hard, and all of us did, but we didn't build big houses and drive fine cars. We lived like most everybody else lived. We just worked harder.

DR: Yes you did. And when you consider the years that were involved to getting to where you were, the time...

Dr. Patterson: I didn't make much money in my whole life until I started buying a house and living in it and selling it and making a little money on it; and working for the Joint Commission and living in a trailer that we pulled and saving per diem. That's how we made out as well as we did, plus social security.

DR: Thank God.

Dr. Patterson: Thank God, that's right.

DR: How many hours in a day would you say you put in, Dr. Patterson, when you and Dr. Simmons Patterson were practicing?

Dr. Patterson: We would begin operating in the morning about eight o'clock which means that we made rounds before that to see our patients, so we would be at the hospital by seven. That means getting up at least by six. We would be either at the hospitals or in our office until supper time, or close to that. Then we would make rounds

again before going home. So, we'd get home fairly late for supper and usually the children had eaten by that time, depending whether you were on call that night. If you were on call that night, you may not have gotten home until eleven o'clock, and you ate when and where you could; but if you weren't, you might get home about seven or eight o'clock. So, this is a twelve or thirteen hour day. If you're not on call that night, you went to bed very soon after supper. We didn't watch television much. We didn't have a television for a long time in the fifties. We didn't want one, didn't want our children to get involved in one. So, our house was pretty quiet. If you were on call that night, after you got home, you didn't stay home very long. We would get phone calls throughout the night either in the emergency rooms or the patients in the hospital. So, we were in and out of bed more than once during the night. Then the next morning, it would start all over again. If you're on weekend call, then you worked all weekend.

DR: Did you have to go back to keep up with what was going on? Did you have to frequently take off and take the courses?

Dr. Patterson: Yes. There were surgical meetings that we would take turns attending. They would be educational meetings. We tried to split them up between us or among the three of us when there were three of us working together. So, we did make that effort, and we all subscribed to surgical journals. And we were pretty faithful about reading them. We all managed to do some writing ourselves about things that we had done and learned. So, I think we stayed pretty well abreast of what was going on.

DR: Did you have an active medical society then?

Dr. Patterson: Yes, we had a medical society. Each hospital had its own hospital staff meetings and we'd talk about hospital problems there, but we had a medical society. I think we met out at the Trent Pines Club. I don't know how scientific it was when the meetings were held, but we did have speakers come down every now and then. I know when I was up at Chapel Hill in anesthesia, I came down here a couple of times and talked to the medical society about things that I had learned at Chapel Hill.

DR: To keep them abreast of what was going on.

Dr. Patterson: Yeah.

DR: This is an interesting question. Are you glad you went into medicine?

Dr. Patterson: I have mixed emotions about that, Dorothy. I have to say yes because if I hadn't gone into medicine, I wouldn't have met Alice, and I wouldn't have these four children and these eight grandchildren. So, that's a plus, you know. I have to say yes. But put that aside, and I'm not sure. I think that maybe I would have been better suited for something else.

DR: Teacher?

Dr. Patterson: Yes. I think I would have maybe had a happier life if I had perhaps been a teacher on a university level, maybe history teaching. I think that kind of thing suits me. But I really value the years in medicine. I value the people I think I helped. I feel very sorry about some of the mistakes I've made. Every physicians has

in his heart things that happened that just will forever grieve him, and I'm not an exception to that. So, I guess there are pluses and minuses there.

DR: For all of us in what we chose.

Dr. Patterson: I think that my going into surgery was a mistake. I don't think my personality suits being a surgeon. Most people going into surgery have a pretty set personality. They are aggressive, they push pretty hard. Not everybody. I can mention more than one surgeon that's not that way, but for the most part, they're that way. I'm not that way, and I found the life of a surgeon probably didn't suit me as well as the life of an internist would have suited me. I like to sit down and talk to people and listen to them and spend time with them. I found as a surgeon that was very hard to do. The pressures of being a surgeon were really too much for me. And yet, I'm sort of happy when I come back to New Bern that people know me as a surgeon and people I see I've operated on and they I think remember me fondly and I remember them fondly. I'm not thought of as an anesthesiologist.

DR: No. I didn't realize that.

Dr. Patterson: Or a Joint Commission surveyor. Although, I spent more time in those professions than I did in surgery. Here, I'm a surgeon, and that sort of makes me feel good. I don't have really big regrets, but I think if I had it to do over again, I might think twice.

DR: We all have those if we live this long. Dr. Patterson, can you think of anything in New Bern that you would like to talk about?

Dr. Patterson: Will you just let me have free rein for a little bit?

DR: Free rein.

Dr. Patterson: All right. I have some memories of New Bern I'd like to speak to, and you can stop me if I go too long. When I was a boy, there were a lot of boy scout troops in New Bern, but there was no boy scout troop for downtown New Bern boys. Troop 13 with Mr. Potter was out in Riverside, and folks downtown were sort of left out of it. Then Mr. C. Green came along and set up Troop 11, and we all signed up. We had a scout room below Stanley Hall on Middle Street.

That's about where that little coffee shop is, or restaurant is, Fred & Claire's. The remarkable thing that we did was establish a drum and bugle corps. Mr. Green, right away, started that. He had twelve boys who learned how to bugle and twelve who learned how to play the drums. We would practice at nighttime, and we got pretty good. When we were good enough, we would parade through the New Bern streets late in the afternoon when the businesses were over or early in the evening before it was too late. We would go down Pollock Street and down Middle Street and down Broad Street beating the drums and blowing the bugles just as loud as we could, and we had a ball! We thought we were the best thing around.

DR: That's great! Think of the trouble it kept you out of.

Dr. Patterson: I know. I said we had to practice at night time because the businesses wouldn't have tolerated it during the day time.

When I was a boy living on New Street near East Front Street, of course

I walked to school up Hancock Street, and I remember the Stanly House which was then sitting where the post office (which has just changed), where the post office is now. The Stanly House then was still facing Middle Street and it had a wall around it and a hedge around it. When I got to Stanly House, I would cross New Street and get up on that wall, and I remember it now, and I would walk along that wall all the way to the end of the Stanly House fence to see if I could avoid falling off.

DR: I remember that.

Dr. Patterson: When I grew up, radio was pretty new. Very few people had radios. My father got a radio, and I can remember listening to Santa Claus on that radio when I was a little boy, and I thought he was talking just to me and nobody else. Later on when I was a little older, still radios were pretty scarce in town, and on New Year's Day, the Rose Bowl game was the big event. My father would line up seats in our living room just like in an auditorium, side by side in rows, and his friends and our friends would come and sit in those chairs and listen to the radio announcing the Rose Bowl football game.

DR: Was it clear?

Dr. Patterson: Yes. Yes. I can see that room right now full of people sitting in the living room.

DR: What was served?

Dr. Patterson: I don't remember. Probably nobody was interested in that. Trolley cars were a great thing when we were young. Many people in town have talked about these and have described the routes

through town, like, Callie Newman and others, and they know them better than I. I just have one real memory about trolley cars. The trolley car came down Craven Street from the Queen Street area heading down toward the Trent river and it passed the New Street junction. Well, there was a boy living down the street from me on New Street two houses down named Sonny Foote. His father was sort of a music man. He had a trailer and he would put on shows. Sonny was a pretty individual character, and his father made him leave home a couple of times. Sonny would go down to the corner of Craven Street and New Street, and I'd go with him and I'd help him. He'd get a ball of string and tie it to a pole at the corner of New Street and stretch it across the street to a pole on the opposite side so that when the trolley came along this string would knock the arm to the electric wire loose and the trolley would stop. We had positioned ourselves always somewhere where we could watch what was happening but they couldn't find us. Of course, it made the trolley conductor very upset! It got to the point when he would come to the corner of New and Craven, he would automatically stop and get out and look for the string. We figured "That was all right, we made him stop no matter what."

DR: Did your parents ever find out about that?

Dr. Patterson: No, I don't think we ever told them about that. I remember one Christmas, my mother was given a present by my father of a Kelvinator. Until that time, we had had wooden ice boxes. The ice man would come and deliver 25, 50 pounds or whatever. We would put a sign in the window and he would bring it in. But she had a

Kelvinator at Christmas, and she was so thrilled.

DR: Oh yeah!

Dr. Patterson: But you know, many years later in 1946 when Alice and I were struggling in Richmond, Virginia in neuro-surgery for a year, we had a wooden ice box still.

DR: Did you?

Dr. Patterson: Yep. We didn't have any electrical ice box then. Our house, I can't remember whether we had steam heat throughout the house. I think we did because someone stoked the furnace with coal every day. Simmons and I slept in the same room in twin beds. Early in the morning it was very cold and we had to get up and go to school, and I remember that our room was heated by a little King heater over in the corner, a little stove. We would have to get up in the morning and build a fire in that stove so we would be warm enough to dress.

We would take turns doing that. He would get up one morning and stoke the fire and get back in bed, and then the next time would be mine.

DR: I think our Ernest and Rich did that.

Dr. Patterson: We used to go to Morehead a lot. This is outside of New Bern, but it was one of our big activities. The old Atlantic Hotel was standing there then. That was a huge wooden structure and it was a center of social activities for eastern North Carolina. My father, as a young man, used to be the physician there. In later years, we would go there and stay. Often we'd go down on the train. One of the fun things we did was to go over to the ocean. There was no bridge.

We would take a boat from a pier at the old Atlantic Hotel and go

across to Atlantic beach and anchor on the sound side of Fort Macon.

Fort Macon was completely covered with sand. We would walk across Fort Macon and see some of the breastworks projecting up and go to the beach and go swimming. It was an all day effort, and it was fun.

DR: How long did it take you to get to Morehead from New Bern?

Dr. Patterson: I can't remember, but it was quite a trip. The roads were narrow.

DR: We always took a lunch.

Dr. Patterson: Cab Calloway and his orchestra played at the Atlantic Hotel one time. When I was thirteen years old, I went down there and heard him. It was my first big band. I remember to this day standing in front of that bandstand listening to that man and watching, and I thought just how wonderful he was. Later on, the casino at Atlantic beach where the circle is now, was a beautiful place, and the dances that were held there were so great. Paul Whiteman would come down and play and big name orchestras, and all of us went. In fact, all of us went to dances all over eastern North Carolina as we grew up; in Wilson and in Kinston.

DR: Would that green car make it?

Dr. Patterson: No, we didn't go in that. This was a later era, a few years later. We would dance in tobacco warehouses in New Bern and all of these towns. They would be decorated with streamers enclosing one part of the floor, the orchestra would be big name orchestras or they would be local orchestras, and we'd dance. The same crowd would be over at the next town at the next dance. We grew

up knowing people in all the surrounding towns where we danced with them all of the time, and we loved to dance!

DR: The Kinston folks always seemed to have more money than the New Bern folks.

Dr. Patterson: Always!

DR: And always entertained so much more lavishly than we did.

Dr. Patterson: We went sailing a lot. Sara Meadows had a sail boat and Betsy Williams had a sail boat, and they were the two chief people for us. We would go on moonlight sails down the Neuse river.

We'd leave in the evening and get home maybe two o'clock in the morning.

We would sing and we would eat watermelon and later on we'd drink beer, and it was just a really wonderful, wonderful time.

DR: It was!

Dr. Patterson: Yes. I learned to play pool in the Elk's Club. My father was an Elk, and I became an Elk later. The Elk's Club was then and still is on the top floor of the Elk's building. Dad loved to play pinochle, and he would play pinochle with all of his buddies up there in the Elk's Club. He'd take me up there with him. There were three pool tables there, and I was allowed to use them. I played on those tables and played pool until I got to be a pretty good pool player. I startled my son later on when we played at the Johns Hopkins' Club in Baltimore when I was in Baltimore as a doctor. He just didn't know I could beat him. Just recently out in Iowa, my fourteen year old grandson said that he was afraid to play pool with me because he would embarrass me so much, and I said, "Let's try." I beat him two

game. His parent's thought it was wonderful.

DR: Dr. Patterson, do you remember the pool hall, was it on Middle Street or Pollock Street?

Dr. Patterson: There's one still there on Pollock Street.

DR: Do you remember that used to be a hangout?

Dr. Patterson: I'm not sure I remember that, Dorothy. Since I've been coming back to New Bern, I see the one on Pollock Street in the same spot next to the Chinese restaurant. Maybe that's the same one. I have great memories of Mr. J. B. Dawson. Mr. Dawson was the editor of the Sun Journal, and his son, Billy, was my really dear friend and still is. Mr. Dawson was a rotund, fairly short man, and he was a lot of fun. I used to stay at the Dawson house a lot visiting all of them. I remember Mr. Dawson one day, when there was a big celebration on the river, the Pamlico Cutter was anchored out on the Neuse river, and I was out there with a girl I had come down with from Tarboro. All these fine ships were out there and boats would pass by decorated. It was just a parade of the best boats around. Right in the middle of them comes a row boat with Mr. Dawson sitting there in his short sleeves, or undershirt, with a hat on his head, sitting in the middle of the row boat looking forward with ropes to steer the outboard motor and a parasol strapped to the seat over his head, and he went by with all these wonderful boats, and everybody cheered him!

DR: Didn't he fish a lot?

Dr. Patterson: Yes.

DR: I remember.

Dr. Patterson: I went to Norfolk with him and Mrs. Dawson to see Billy one time when Billy was in the Naval Academy and had come home from a long trip. We were driving back from Norfolk on Highway 17 coming to New Bern and there were no other cars on the road, and Mr. Dawson got sleepy. So, he stopped the car right in the middle of the road and left the lights burning and got out of the car and he ran down the road hollering at the top of his lungs and ran back hollering at the top of his lungs to wake himself up. So, he drove home safely. But he was a great fellow. He wrote a column called "Jay Bee Dee" column.

DR: J.B.D.

Dr. Patterson: We played baseball behind Billy Hand's house which is the house on the corner of Craven and Johnson Street, the northeast corner. It's where Frances Clement lives now. In those days, Billy's yard extended pretty far back. The East Front Street boys and some others would play baseball against the South Front Street boys, and they were really tough games. The thing I remember about them is, Andy Fuller and Johnny Mitchell threw such hard fast balls that nobody could ever hit them, and they always beat us. But we had a lot of fun playing ball. At school, there were fights on the school green. Fighting was just part of going to school it seemed like. I remember I got in lots of fights. Some of them I won, and some of them I didn't. What would happen when a fight would develop on a school green, all the students would form a circle, packed very tightly. There was no way of getting out of there. The fight had to go on until it finished.

Nobody could back away. One person had to get beat. They cheered them, and it was just as blood thirsty as any boxing match you go to these days. There were many fights that I remember. I won't call names, but there were some really good fights.

DR: Ernest was in a bad one. His brother got so upset that he grabbed a tree limb and hit the other guy that was on top of his brother. It was down at the corner of the New Bern school.

Dr. Patterson: Linden Street which stretches from New Street to East Front Street used to be called Short Street. The name Short Street was very apropos. It's a shame they changed it. Well, in those days, the people who lived on Short Street were pretty tough people.

Anyhow, they formed a definite group. Our house backed right up to Short Street and there was a fence there and it had knot holes in it.

We were always feuding with the Short Street gang and they were feuding with us. So, we would watch them through the knot holes in the fence, and when they'd come along we'd pop up and throw a piece coal at them.

So, we had fights with the Short Street gang all the time, but we were really friends. I remember Mitchell Hollowell was the one who convinced me that if you picked up a toad frog, you'd get warts all over your hands, and I would never pick up a frog after that.

DR: Oh yes, I always believed that!

Dr. Patterson: In our neighborhood on New Street, we had blacks living right next to us. Well, not right next to our house, but across the street where Johnny Dunn's house is now, a black family lived.

I can't remember their names, but their son used to work for Dr. Ashford

later on. They had an old ramshackled fence around their yard and a real cabin inside. They lived there, and they raised animals; chickens and goats and things in their yard, right in the neighborhood.

Right down the street where Sam Jones' apartments are now at the corner of Linden Street and New Street, the Barron family lived. The wife's name was Honey Barron. They had lots of children. Two black families in one block of the central part of the residential historic district of New Bern. Nobody worried about it at all. Maybe they did, but we didn't. I don't remember that anybody ever fussed about blacks and whites living together. I'm sure we were naive, but it didn't seem bad to us. I just wanted to mention that, and say that things did seem to be pretty good. We built the first house at Trent Shores in 1954. Alice and I had been living first, in Green Park; and then in Trent Park; and then we built a house. Jack Aberly built it for us. We were the first ones to build out there. Walter Paramore owns that house now. Al Ward built his house. He started building before we were through and Leon Scott built one right next to us as we were building, but we were the first. Then the Scott's built their house and then George and Mary Bullock built a house out there, so there were four houses. We had more fun out there. We were not right on the river, but we owned a lot in front of us right on the river, and we cut a slip in there and we had three small outboard boats. We had a beach, and we would swim out there in the water and we would boat and we would have picnics on the beach. Trent Shores was just the greatest place for kids to grow up you ever saw, and we had a really

good time out there.

DR: How old were the children then, Dr. Patterson?

Dr. Patterson: Young Alyce was six. Priscilla, was a senior in high school when we left, so she was about the ninth grade then.

That span in there. The kids would go to New Bern by boat. We didn't have anything over fifteen feet long, and they could manage them. Little Alyce had a row boat with a motor on it when she was six years old. She and the rest of them would take trips to New Bern and tie up at the piers at the foot of Middle Street and walk through town and go see their friends and come home, and it was all right. They could swim. They wore life jackets and it was safe. They couldn't drive a car and they didn't have any way to go, but they came in by boat, and it was all right. When St. Luke's Hospital was in its early days; there's something I want to mention because I would like to have it on record, when I was a little boy, there was a tennis court across the street from St. Luke's. My father and Dr. Jones built it. The Baptist church didn't occupy the front part of that lot in those days.

It was just behind there. There was a vacant lot between the Baptist church and Broad Street, and there was a clay tennis court there with a big wire fence around it. During the day when Dr. Jones and dad weren't busy, they'd go over there and play tennis. More than once, I went over there and watched them play. The only person I found that remembers that is Thelma Lewis. She remembers it too.

DR: The Shipp's lived on the corner.

Dr. Patterson: The Shipp's lived next to the corner, going East.

They did not live on the corner.

DR: Then the church.

Dr. Patterson: Then the church; then George Street; then St. Luke's. But that tennis court was there just like I say. Very few people remember it. St. Luke's Hospital must have been built by a very talented builder. From 1914 to now is a long time, and that hospital is just in great shape! I know how hospitals crumble because I've seen them all over the United States built in the 1950's, built of brick and just in bad shape. Here this hospital has been standing there since 1914 and looking good! I'm very proud of that.

DR: It is a strong looking building, Dr. Patterson.

Dr. Patterson: Yes. I think it has some problems now, and they're going to have to do some work on it. My mother had an electric car.

DR: Oh, did she?

Dr. Patterson: Yes. She never drove any car except this electric car. She didn't know how to drive, but she drove this electric car.

I remember it as sort of a box like affair, black, with a bar you steer it by. At night, it would go into the garage behind our house.

As I recall, the whole back of the garage was filled with charging equipment; lights flashing and bulbs glowing and charging the battery of that car every night. She had an accident, and I don't remember the details. I think it was at East Front Street corner in that car, and she never drove again. I don't know what happened.

DR: Was it the only car in New Bern?

Dr. Patterson: I think it may of been the first electric car

in New Bern. I don't know.

DR: Do you remember Mr. Waters and his?

Dr. Patterson: I remember the stories of Mr. Waters. He invented a car of his own, didn't he?

DR: Un huh.

Dr. Patterson: And it worked!

DR: On Broad Street he had a big building behind his house on Bern Street.

Dr. Patterson: Something else that I recall about my youth was the Country Club. When I was just a little boy, I loved to play golf. My real good buddy was Billy Caroon who lived up on Hancock Street. Alicia and Sugar and his folks. His father was a banker, and their mother made Merry-Maid peanuts; salted peanuts in little bags sold for a nickel. Billy and I would walk out to the Country Club.

DR: With your golf clubs?

Dr. Patterson: Yes. We would do this sometimes after school and every weekend, and we'd play golf all day long, and then walk back home again. We did that.

DR: How old were you then, Dr. Patterson?

Dr. Patterson: I think I was probably nine or ten when we started doing that.

DR: You could allow children then the freedom.

Dr. Patterson: There was no worry about safety. My parents were very strict with me about many things, but they didn't blink an eye at my walking to the Country Club. The Country Club then was a beautiful

shingle building with a big dance floor. We used to have lots of dances there later. It was a charming place. Ralph Miner was the pro and Mr. Miller took care of the building. He used to sit down by the old King stove down in the locker room and just rock in his rocking chair.

There were two clay tennis courts. As you face from the original Country Club building straight ahead, they were just beyond the far end of the parking lot. The good tennis players in those days were Gyp Lucas, Sherman Lewis, Dan Roberts, and my brother, Simmons. Simmons was a great athlete. The last tennis match I remember watching was between Simmons and Sherman Lewis for the club championship. Sherman chopped the ball and Simmons had long even strokes, and Simmons won and became the club champion. Sherman later played less tennis and more golf, and he became the club champion in golf. He was just a great golfer. But the Country Club played a big role in my years of growing up. There were only nine holes then and the greens were sand greens and they were hard to play on, but they were fun and we had a good time.

DR: Do you remember the Sloan estate?

Dr. Patterson: Yes! I remember the Sloan estate when it was Mr. Sloan's estate. It later became a social club, the Trent Pines Club. Who was it that ran that?

DR: Miles -Fred.

Dr. Patterson: Mr. Miles owned it. Anyhow, the home became a very fine evening place to go.

DR: With the terrace and the river.

Dr. Patterson: The meals served and the river out there, made it a very fine place to go for dinner. The Trent Pines Club was very, very popular with the swimming pool out there and you could go swimming.

One other thing I'd like to mention. My Uncle Albert helped run the Mill Supply Company on South Front Street where Joe Alcoke used to have his garage and Burke Taylor had his place. But it was a Mill Supply Company then. They sold a lot of things. They sold Kelvinators, and they had a lot of Kelvinator boxes, and I took a couple of them home and made them into a little building and fashioned it into a little store with a counter on the front and printed a sign and called it "Pat's Place." I took it down to the river shore and set it up on the rivershore and Billy Caroon and I ran it. My mother would make sandwiches. We would sell them for ten cents. His mother would give us packages of her Merry-Maid salted peanuts and we'd sell them for a nickel, and we had soft drinks. We had a thriving business going there on the river shore. I think the way we failed was, we finally ate it all ourselves. So, we went out of business. Sonny Foote, my neighbor, who put the string across the street with the trolley, when he was thrown out of his house by his father, would come down there and sleep at night in this building, and I told him he could do it.

DR: How old was he?

Dr. Patterson: Sonny was several years older than I was, so he was probably thirteen or fourteen. The police never bothered us about selling anything, but they saw Sonny sleeping down there one night and they thought that wasn't right, and so they made some legal

commotion about that. Mr. Dawson ran a big story on the front page of the Sun Journal about all the commotion about "Pat's Place" on the rivershore. But we had fun doing that.

DR: Dr. Patterson, do you remember anything about law enforcement back then? What was some of the kinds of things that would come out in the paper?

Dr. Patterson: Dorothy, I can't remember a whole lot about that. I remember the policemen of course, but I don't remember much about that.

DR: I don't think we took that in.

Dr. Patterson: There was a vacant lot on East Front Street where the old Holiday Inn was. First of all, at the foot of East Front Street where the bridge now is, was a house that the Lumsden's lived in. It was to the right of the bridge as you face across the river, but it was there before the bridge. Next to that, was a vacant lot; and next to that, was a house that may of been Dr. Civils' house; and next to that, was the Dawson's house. We used to play on that vacant lot, and it used to grow up with pretty high brush. I remember one time, we set that place on fire and burnt it. It got out of control, and the New Bern fire department had to come down there to put it out. There was lots of trouble about that.

DR: Were you punished?

Dr. Patterson: Yes. Whipping was something that happened in those days. I would get whipped with the back of a hair brush.

DR: And switches.

Dr. Patterson: Switches. It didn't happen often, but you always dreaded it and remembered it. One day I was flying a kite down there on that vacant lot. This was a cloth kite that somebody had made for me. It was as tall as I was, and it was a very strong kite. The Lumsden's had a brick chimney and had a radio antenna or wire tied from the chimney to a post somewhere. This kite got caught in that chimney and pulled the chimney down and it fell in and threw soot all over the house inside, and my folks had to pay to get that house cleaned!

DR: Oh, Dr. Patterson!

Dr. Patterson: That was another bad time. There were lots of sort of bad times, but most of them were funny.

DR: Can you recall anything else about city living?

Dr. Patterson: I remember that we used to play ball and games in the streets. New Street was not busy at all from the stand point of cars, and we would just play ball in the streets. If a car came along, it was almost an insult to us. I remember too, the black people coming down New Street when I was just a little boy, going to the Neuse river to be baptized. They would be dressed in white clothes, and they would be singing hymns, and they would be waiving their arms above their heads. They would go down to East Front Street and turn to the right and go to the corner where Broad Street ended. There was a little beach there when the tide was low, and the preacher would go out in the water and these folks would come out one by one and he would immerse them and they would be baptized. The New Bern people would be there in droves to watch the ceremony. But I remember as a boy, these people

coming by. I remember too, the black ladies coming down the street early in the morning selling vegetables; shouting, "Fresh butter beans, fresh corn." Later in the day, they would come with fresh fish, and you'd buy from them.

DR: Yes.

Dr. Patterson: I thought that was just wonderful.

DR: Oh yes. I remember the ice wagon.

Dr. Patterson: What do you remember about the ice wagon.

DR: Getting the ice when they chipped it and standing on the back.

Dr. Patterson: I think all of us remember that. It was so nice to stand on the running board of that wagon and get ice, and I don't remember that the ice man ever fussed at us for doing it.

DR: No.

Dr. Patterson: You know, I've written a poem about that and people outside of New Bern have read it and they said, "We did the same thing in our town!" I've also written a poem about the ladies selling fresh food, and they say, "They did that in our town too."

I thought it was all New Bern, but it wasn't. Let me just speak to the rivershore for a minute. In those days when I grew up, the rivershore had a break water made out of shell rock just like the wall around Cedar Grove cemetery. The grass ran straight down to that.

There was no walkway there at all. It was just East Front Street and a curve then grass with some bushes going down to the shell rock.

The river was fairly clean. You could really go out in the river.

There used to be lots of fish along there; lots of mullet. I remember having a gig and throwing a gig into a school of mullets, just blind throwing it, and gigging a mullet there were so many of them out there.

The rivershore was a wonderful place, and so was East Front Street, and so was Broad Street. Broad Street was beautiful with its trees.

Maybe when the bridge goes, it will be beautiful again. I hope so.

DR: Dr. Patterson, you haven't mentioned your grandfather who did so much for Craven County.

Dr. Patterson: My grandfather was Senator Furnifold McLendel Simmons. My brother is named after him, with the whole name there plus Patterson. He was in the U. S. Senate for thirty years and in the House of Representative for a number of years before that. He lived most of his life on the corner of East Front Street and New Street right across from the Bishop-Coor house. Later, my parents lived there too. The house was left to my mother. He was a fine man. I was too young to really appreciate him.

DR: He was distinguished.

Dr. Patterson: He was a very powerful man on a national level. He was chairman of the Senate Finance Committee during World War I. He was largely responsible for the inland waterway being placed here. He was respected. He was the boss of politics in North Carolina for a long time. In his day, he did what what was done in those days. He was much for white supremacy, and that was the way it was. Some people don't remember him very kindly because of that, but he was a product of his times, and he really was a great man. Nationally, he

was well, well thought of. But he lived in that house when he wasn't up in Washington in the Senate. I knew him when I was a young man, as an old man. He wasn't as old as I am now. I used to take him to ride when I could drive a car. He owned property out there on the Trent river beyond the Country Club and all these areas that have been developed out there; Fox Chase. That was his property, his farms.

I would take him out there and we'd ride and go over to Trenton. He was a great land owner, and a nice man. I remember him as a very kind man.

DR: I know you must be proud of him.

Dr. Patterson: Oh yes. I'm very proud of him. I'm proud they finally put a plaque up on the airport to note that it used to be called the Simmons-Nott Airport. I hope, this might be a pipe dream, that when the new bridge is built, they might name it after him. He hasn't been recognized by the city, really, very much. But I think I might spear an effort to get the new bridge named after him.

DR: That would be most fitting. What party was he?

Dr. Patterson: He was a Democrat. He had much to do with democratic politics in North Carolina for a long time. When the Al Smith campaign came up in the late twenties, he opposed Al Smith. Al Smith was a Democratic choice, and his conscious wouldn't let him vote for Al Smith. Not because he was a Catholic, but because of his connections with the "Tammany Hall" crowd. At least, I think, my grandfather was very honest when he said, "That's the reason. I just can't see this man as President." He bucked the party, and he led

the state to vote Republican.

DR: I remember.

Dr. Patterson: That was his undoing. He lost his next election by a landslide. That was the real reason, but he was

pretty old then. I don't think he should have run. He was an old man.

DR: How old was he when he died, Dr. Patterson?

Dr. Patterson: I think about 80, 82, somewhere along in there. He was living with his daughter, Ella Meadows, out at Green Springs on Trent Blvd. for those last years. Mrs. Wade Meadows and my mother were his daughters. He had four daughters. Two of them and a son were by his first wife whose name was Humphrey. My mother and Mrs. Meadows, Aunt Ella, were his children by his second wife who was Belle Gibbs from Hyde County. So, mother and Ella, were full sisters and mother and the folks in Raleigh, where the other two daughters lived, were half sisters. Jim lived in Pollocksville, and he was a half brother.

DR: It goes back a long ways, doesn't it?

Dr. Patterson: Yes.

DR: I'm glad you came back to New Bern.

Dr. Patterson: So am I, Dorothy.

DR: And brought Alice.

Dr. Patterson: So am I. I think I've talked more than you probably wanted me to.

DR: Oh, no. I was going to say, if you think of anything else and if I think of anything, may I come back?

Dr. Patterson: Sure. Yes. I have pretty well covered things I think. I don't know of anything else. So, let's cut it off. I appreciate you doing this. I enjoyed it.

DR: Thank you!

END OF INTERVIEW