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Interview with Bird Daniel

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Daniel, Bird (D) interviewed December 2, 1988

Interviewer: Is it your great, great grandfather that is buried in Taylor's Creek Cemetery that was born in 1732?

D: I don't know when he was born but he is buried in Taylor's Creek Cemetery. He was buried in the old family burial ground out in the fields beyond Taylor's Creek and my father had the graves moved so they wouldn't be lost and had them put in the cemetery.

I: Isn't that part of Fort Stewart now?

D: It is a part of the Fort Stewart area now and of course it is well preserved and cared for. I haven't been down there in some time. I usually go- they have one day a year- a memorial day at the old church down there and I usually go to it.

I: What kind of church is that, a Methodist church?

D: It is a Congregational, I think. Wait a minute, Midway is Congregational and I think that is Methodist.

I: All right, let's start at the beginning. Tell me when and where you were born and something about your parents if you will, please.

D: I was born in Claxton in Evans County on October 8, 1910 and that puts me about seventy eight years old.

I: Tell me your parents' names.

D: My father was James Wallace Daniel and my mother was Barkesdale Callaway Daniel. She was from Mill Camp (?), Georgia near Dalton. Her father was an itinerant Baptist preacher.

I: Would she have been related to the Callaway's down in-

D: It was a different relationship between all of the Callaway's. There is no close connection between us and the rich Callaway's, but they were all kin.

I: How did your mother and father happen to meet, Bird?

D: She taught school at Valdosta, Georgia where his brother was the principal of the school system down there. He met her as a young doctor visiting in

Valdosta. Then later on I think she taught in Glennville and they married. He was practicing in Glennville.

I: Were there other children in your family?

D: Oh, yes- and you were talking about my immediate brothers and sisters?

I: Yes.

D: I have two living brothers: James Wallace, Jr. and John J.S. Daniel and he lives in California. Then I have one sister living and another brother who is dead and his name was Roland Daniel and he lived in Waynesboro.

I: So there were five children in the family?

D: Yes, five children in all.

I: Were you all born at home?

D: Yes, we were all born at home. That was the only place to be born. Now, I delivered any babies in the home. I can remember the last baby I delivered in a home and it was in Bulloch County. I can go to the house now where I delivered it because I stayed in that house. That woman had a long labor. I stayed in there about thirty hours and finally delivered the baby and I made up my mind right then that from then on we were going to the hospital because the hospital had become available then.

I: What about your schooling? Where did you go to school?

D: I went to Claxton High School and Columbus High School in Columbus, Georgia.

I: Why Columbus?

D: Because I had an uncle who was a superintendent of the schools in Columbus and I couldn't get into Emory from Claxton. So he told my father that if I would be his kindling and coal boy he would give me two years of high school education free.

I: So you lived in his home while you attended?

D: I lived in his home as one of the children.

I: And did you graduate from Columbus?

D: Yes, I graduated from Columbus.

I: What year did you enter Emory?

D: In 1926.

I: Tell me what Emory was like then.

D: Emory was a small school of about fifteen hundred, clay hills and no sidewalks- red clay. It was a young up and coming school.

I: It was a Methodist school then.

D: Methodist and you knew everybody on campus because it was small enough to do that.

I: What did you major in there? Did they have a pre-med- ?

D: In medical sciences and later on into medicine.

I: Did Emory already have the medical school there?

D: Oh, yes.

I: Did they absorb another medical school?

D: They absorbed the old Atlanta College of Physicians and Surgeons and several old medical schools in Atlanta to make up I think about eighteen or nineteen cases they took over and together made it the Emory Medical School.

I: Was it located right on the campus there where the undergraduate school was?

D: For the first two years we were out on the campus and the last two years we were located at Grady Hospital.

I: So you didn't have a hospital on campus at that time?

D: Yes, we had the university hospital but Grady Hospital was really the great teaching hospital because it was completely charity and it had such a great variety of clinical specimens and a variety of illnesses and just a much better teaching hospital and still is one of the greatest teaching hospitals in the country.

- I: Did you got through four years of undergraduate studies?**
- D: No, three. You didn't have to go through four back then.**
- I: Three years of combination courses and then four years of medicine and then the first year of medical school you got your BS degree then three years later you got your MD. What about your first two years of medical school? Did you have any clinical experience during that time at all or was it all book work?**
- D: Mostly it was equipped according to the basic sciences and those were the first two years and then last two years were the clinical years.**
- I: Did you feel like those first two years were very demanding or a very taxing kind of- ?**
- D: Clinical school is the most demanding thing and challenging thing that I have ever experienced. I never enjoyed going to school any more in my life. You had the feeling that you were accomplishing something. You were doing what you wanted to do the most.**
- I: Were there any women in your class?**
- D: I have forgotten if there were any women or not- maybe one or two but it was almost none back then. They came later.**
- I: Any teachers that stand out in your mind- particularly from your medical school days? And could you cite some of the ones?**
- D: Probably the primary teacher in our medical school days was a man who taught anatomy, Dr. Homer Blincoe (sp?). He was a very demanding almost slave driver. He poured the work on and pushed and you either responded or you fell by the wayside.**
- I: Did you have a cadaver to work with?**
- D: Oh yes, we had cadavers to work with- two men to a cadaver.**
- I: Did they use formaldehyde back then?**
- D: No, we used I did the embalming for medical schools on the modest for a couple years after I was a freshman student. I got that job and it helped pay tuition ad I worked on anatomy under Dr. Michael and embalmed the fresh bodies that we got in. And we used a combination of embalming fluids composed of a solution made up of ethyl alcohol and we**

made it up ourselves. We made it up with alcohol and glycerin and something else because it was three components and we put it in under pressure. I used to do embalming at night on the bodies and put them in the vats so they would keep so the students could use them.

I: What do you mean when you say “put them in the vats?”

D: Big vats filled with a keeping solution that they lay in. You could keep them for years in those things because they are like mummies.

I: Well, was the keeping solution the same thing that you injected into- ?

D: It was a little bit different but it was still some sort of preserving solution that we put in those elements. But it was interesting work.

I: You didn't have any refrigeration then- it was just the keeping solution?

D: No, we didn't have any refrigeration, just the keeping solution.

I: What was the source of most of your cadavers? Do you know where they came from?

D: They were unclaimed bodies and they came usually through some of the funeral homes. But we would pay the funeral home like, fifteen dollars or something like that.

I: They were vagrants or people who didn't have any families or something like that, I suppose?

D: Yes, vagrants and somebody that they didn't know where they came from, blacks and whites. We often wondered where they came from.

I: After you began your clinical work you said you went to Grady. Did you actually live on the premises at Grady?

D: No, you would live out in town somewhere. I lived, I think, in one of the medical fraternity houses and went back and forth to Grady every day either by street car or private owned vehicle or any way you could get a ride. Sometimes we would walk and it was a strange thing- as clinical students we wore white coats, white uniforms, and we used to walk through what was know as “Black Bottom” between Georgia Baptist Hospital and Grady Hospital. It was a high crime rate area- totally black. As long as you had on a white intern uniform you were perfectly safe among the blacks walking through there.

- I:** They recognized you as a doctor.
- D:** If you did not have on the uniform you would be robbed. But they recognized you as a Grady Hospital doctor and you were their doctors. But I have walked through there on several nights in that white uniform.
- I:** Tell me about your experiences in clinical work.
- D:** It was routine, nevertheless. You start gradually as a medical student and you are brought into it in full place and there again on the wards of Grady and then taught by the visiting staff at Grady Hospital practicing physicians at that time.
- I:** You would just make the rounds with them? Is that the way you started?
- D:** You would make the rounds with them. You would have patients assigned that you would have to work up and that is the histories and the physicals and record that in your own handwriting. They didn't have any recording machines back then so you had to write that in your own long hand. We had some very fine professors who were interested in teaching but were also very fine practitioners. Dr. Ed Paulin was one of them. He was at Warm Springs, whatever President Roosevelt was in- that area. Dr. was a physician with the president.
- I:** When he was here in Georgia?
- D:** When he went to Georgia But he was a great physician and a courtly gentleman.
- I:** Was he a general practitioner or was he a specialist?
- D:** No, he was an internist.
- I:** Specialists were rather rare still back then, weren't they?
- D:** Well yes, Atlanta was a city of about two hundred and twenty five thousand people when I was in school and it had maybe five or six hundred doctors but not nearly the number that they have now. And there were some good specialists among them but it was a town that was small enough that a few prominent physicians could dominate the scene and Dr. Paulin was one of them and a contemporary of his was a surgeon Dr. Floyd McCray. He did his work down at Denmark (?) and you got Dr. T.C. Davidson at Georgia Baptist. But they were all men who dominated the medical scene in Atlanta at that time period.

- I:** I get the feeling that you had a lot of respect for these men that you worked with.
- D:** Oh yes.
- I:** Did you ever have any unpleasant instructors, ones that you considered very difficult to work with or temperamental? Surgeons you know, are supposed to be very temperamental- real prima donnas.
- D:** We had surgeons at that time who were very demanding. If you didn't come up with your work they didn't hesitate to chew you out. But you know, nothing was accepted except the best.
- I:** They didn't work under pressures that current doctors do as far as constantly running scared of lawsuits in a way?
- D:** Well, you almost never heard of an illegal action back then. Now doctors are defensive of medicine and it is not good medicine, no the best, but they have to because a doctor never knows when somebody is going to slap a lawsuit on him whether it is merited or not. It would run him crazy.
- I:** Physicians it seems to me in many instances don't have the same kind of relationship with their patients that they used to have.
- D:** There has been a subtle change over the years, I decry or I don't like to see it. My father told me when I started practicing- and I will never forget what he said- and he said, "If you will practice always in the best interest of the patient you will make a good living. If you go after the dollar you will make a living but you will be a poor doctor." And today, so many of our men are dollar conscious, you see the dollar marks in their eyes.
- I:** Tell me about when you were treating these patients as a clinical student. What were the major drugs that you relied upon back then? You didn't have an awful lot to choose from, did you? Not even the sulfa drugs, did you?
- D:** We didn't have an awful lot and I remember when the sulfa drugs first came into the country and one of the major drug company's representatives, or drug retail man as we called them, came to see me in my office and he said, "I am going to leave a new drug with you." He said, "I am going to give you these and I want you to use them on a pneumonia patient." That was the first time I had ever heard of sulfa.
- I:** And you were already in practice then, weren't you?

- D:** I was a young man in practice in Claxton, Georgia. So incidentally the first patient I used them on was a patient who lived in the old Floyd home at the Floyd Landing on the Canoochee River. I went down to see the old man and he had pneumonia. I left him a handful of those sulfa tablets and he got well.
- I:** Which was rather surprising in those days in an elderly person, I suppose.
- D:** Pneumonia in those days killed thirty five percent who had it. It was a killer. If a man had pneumonia he had a thirty five percent chance of dying. So the sulfa that we had turned the tables on pneumonia and make it a different story and then later of penicillin and we had penicillin during World War II. I have seen all of those things come to pass and it is a different story.
- I:** Let's go back a minute to your clinical days. About the time that you were doing that I was a very small child. My mother had two remedies for anything that was wrong with you. If something was wrong on the inside do you know what you got? You got castor oil. And if anything was wrong on the outside she painted you with iodine or that purple bismuth- that horrible looking stuff.
- D:** Iodine or sulfur ointment.
- I:** Right, but that was about the extent of the medication. Anyway, that made stoics out of all of us. We learned not to complain because the cure was worse than the disease.
- D:** We used to have a thing among ourselves that if you give us Epsom salt, morphine, digitalis- those three drugs, maybe one other quinine because in 1937 malaria killed more people in Georgia than anything. I used to carry quinine in my bags and made house calls.
- I:** Was that because of polluted water?
- D:** Malaria was caused by mosquitoes and the State of Georgia Public Health Department did a marvelous job of cleaning up the mosquitoes and really banished or obliterated malaria as a disease among us. You used to see it all the time and particularly the so-called "Black Water Fever" where the urine turned coffee colored because of hemorrhaging and those people died.
- I:** It is interesting that you call that "Black Water Fever." I saw a movie called "Out of Africa" and one of the characters in there developed "Black Water Fever" but I had never heard that expression used here.
- D:** Black Water Fever is the bleeding into the kidney from malaria and it is a very vicious kind of malaria and you used to see it around here. You used to

see typhoid fever and you used to see Brill fever and all of those diseases are gone now.

I: No, what was Brill fever?

D: Brill fever was similar to typhoid but it wasn't quite so devastating.

I: What was the source of it or what caused it?

D: It was one of the in-between organisms between the actual bacteria and the virus and it was caused by the the carrier was the flea on the common house rat. It carried the virus.

I: That was the source of typhus, wasn't it?

D: Well, typhus was very much the same thing.

I: And you actually saw cases of that then?

D: Oh, treated many of them in this country, Brill typhus. It was a devastating disease. There was a story told about an old doctor who some years ago went up to New York City to do some postgraduate work in the old Bellevue Hospital and he was making the rounds one day with the clinic professor and they came to this bed where the patient had a fever and they were debating the possible cause of the fever and the old country doctor from Georgia walked up and said "It smells like a good case of typhoid fever to me." He recognized it by the smell.

I: I want to talk just a few minutes more about your experiences as a clinical student. Were there any experiences that you had during that time that stand out in your mind that had a real impact, maybe?

D: I suppose there was but I can't think of any particular thing. The thing that I remember about that time period most of all for me it was a period of the most marvelous intellectual growth I have ever experienced- was medical school and intern days- because you were doing the things that you liked to do most. It was true that you weren't being paid much, just fifteen dollars a month as an intern, and your living quarters and your laundry and food and so forth. But you were doing what you wanted to do.

I: I want to go back a little bit about your desire to become a doctor. Do you think your experiences with your father had anything to do with that?

D: Oh sure, my father and my grandfather had a lot to do with it but I can't remember when I wasn't going to be a doctor.

- I: What about your internship when you finished?**
- D: That was at Grady Hospital and they were some great years. I had a lot of fun and a lot of intellectual growth.**
- I: How long did you spend?**
- D: I spent three years at Grady.**
- I: So you were studying to be a surgeon too, really?**
- D: Yes, the full training course was offered at Grady at that time. It was a three year surgical residency. Dr. John Mooney and I were at Grady at the same time. He and I had done a lot of work together.**
- I: He was a very generous hearted man, wasn't he? He was very generous with his time.**
- D: You never did know old Dr. Mooney, did you?**
- I: No, I didn't know his father.**
- D: He was a very fine surgeon before him and really quite a physician. But John and I did a lot of work together.**
- I: Did you have any social life at all while you were there?**
- D: On occasion I would take a nurse to a show and buy her a Coca-cola.**
- I: On fifteen dollars a month you couldn't do much, could you?**
- D: No, we didn't have very much social life.**
- I: You resided at the hospital?**
- D: Yes, in the intern quarters and that was your world. You didn't have to go out of it.**
- I: Did you have specific hours? Were you on call for long periods of time?**
- D: You were on call at Grady- now in those days, as long as you were in the hospital you were on call. You could sign out and another doctor took your calls, but as long as you were in the hospital either sleeping or eating or**

working, you were on call. And they had telephone call system then and each intern had his own ring. Mine was two shorts and a long.

I: So you had very long working days?

D: Yes, and you accepted it and that was it. None of the interns were married back then, or almost none. We had one married intern and I think his wife was a nurse. The rest of us were all single. You didn't have time to get married or court.

I: What year did you leave?

D: I left Grady in 1936 and I came to Savannah and I was going to be the house doctor at Central Georgia Hospital in Savannah and Dr. Craig Barrow was the head of that hospital. I came out there and stayed a couple of months. I came down in July and my father got sick in Claxton with the flu and he thought he was going to die. He became very depressed about his practice and he couldn't do it. So I just resigned from Savannah and came out and took over his practice. I stayed a year to help him through that year practicing medicine out there in 1936 and 1937 and then came over here to Statesboro in 1939.

I: Did you have an occasion to meet Dr. Julian Quattlebaum while you were in Savannah?

D: Oh yes, I already knew him. He was a young doctor- a surgeon about thirty five years of age at that time and on the make going up. He and Dr. Mike Eagan and he was the primary surgeon over at St. Joseph's Catholic Hospital in Savannah and was equally good as Dr. Quattlebaum. I knew him very well and I knew Lee Broderick who was an intern, very well.

I: Dr. Quattlebaum spoke very highly of a Dr. Waring. He felt Dr. Waring had a lot of influence on him.

D: Dr. Waring had a lot of influence on the physicians in Savannah. Dr. Waring was a very aristocratic surgeon in Savannah.

I: That first year of practice when you were working with your dad- did you have any real frights that you can remember?

D: Well, the deliveries in the homes. I have seen women die here you couldn't do anything about it because you didn't have any hospital to go to or couldn't get them to one.

I: Did you still have childbed fever back then?

D: That had just about disappeared. We knew how to handle that. We were taught in medical school how to avoid it. If you got a postpartum infection it was your fault. As a doctor, you shouldn't get it and we didn't get them. I never will forget, and this is a little bit crude but I will tell you the sort of thing that happens to you. I was a young doctor delivering a baby in the home, right in Claxton, early one morning. I sort of looked out the window and saw the sunrise as the baby was being born. The mother-in-law and the young husband were the only people there with them in the home. Finally the baby was born and the mother got a little laceration and I told the mother that "There is just one little bitsy tear down here and if you be right still I will sew it up and it will be just like it had always was," and she said "Doc, for all I care you can sew that damn thing clean up," and that young husband looked at me.

I: After that year as your father's health improved what did you do? Did you come to Statesboro then?

D: No, I went for a brief six months up in Hawkinsville but I didn't like Hawkinsville. I came back down here to Statesboro and my father had his practice in Claxton and he practiced there until he was eighty four years old. He practiced a little, not a whole lot. But it was nice to be close to Mama and Daddy. My mother lived a good many years after that.

I: Where did you set up your practice? Where was your office located- in Claxton?

D: No, here in Statesboro. Do you know where Darley Insurance Agency is?

I: Yes.

D: That is where my office was. The first office I had was there. Roger Holland, Sr., and the Holland family owned that property and I talked to Roger Holland and asked him if he would build me a little office and he said, "Let me talk to Mama." Old Mrs. Holland called the shots in the family and she was the queen bee.

I: That would have been the widow of Dr. Holland?

D: Yes, Dr. Marvin Holland. Mrs. Holland said it was alright to build me an office so they constructed two or three little offices there and I was in one of them and Dr. McGhnty was in another.

I: What about the hospital facilities in Statesboro back then?

D: The hospital opened in 1936 and I brought some of the first patients over here who were living in Claxton. We didn't have a hospital in Claxton. I would send the patients over and I had a forty horsepower Cub airplane. I would fly over here and land in the field that was back of the hospital which was a development and not a lot of houses. I would land in that field and climb the fence and walk over and make my rounds. I did that until lets J.D. Hill owned the land from above Portal. But anyway, he told me I could use it to land in but he said "I am going to put some cattle in there." He had a big bull in there and that bull got after me one day when I landed and I took off. So I had to land somewhere else. I started going out at the airport and I got a fellow here in Statesboro I would come over and circle and I had to circle this filling station downtown and he would meet me out at the airport and bring me to town. But sometimes I would come by car. None of the roads were paved. The pavement at that time in Statesboro on South Main Street extended about to where the Masonic Lodge is now, no further.

I: Do you mean 301 wasn't paved at that time?

D: No.

I: So it was paved just right through the main street of town?

D: No, no through the main part. It didn't go past the Masonic Lodge. It stopped right in front of the old Holland house.

I: And this was in 1936?

D: Right, 1936-1937.

I: Did you have a paved road to Savannah? Do you know if 80 was paved?

D: Yes, old Route 80 was one of the first. It was concrete but all around 80 that went to Savannah is now paved. It was one of the first paved roads in the state of Georgia.

I: So you never did practice at the hospital that Dr. Floyd had?

D: There were several little hospitals. There was one up over- do you know where Krystal is now? That new hospital over there now- Dr. Deal had a little hospital over there and there was another one up in the old Norris house and Dr. Mooney and Dr. Floyd had that hospital. I think Dr. Mooney at one time had a little hospital in his home. But there were several makeshift hospitals. They were nothing more than a sleeping place where they operated on people but they were all we had. We couldn't get to Savannah. And when you got to

Savannah you didn't have much down there. Savannah was horse and buggy medicine back in those days too.

I: What about the care of black patients? Could you admit them to those hospitals?

D: Yes, but on separate wards.

I: Did you have a black doctor here at that time?

D: Yes, Dr. Van Buren. He was very poor but actually when he hit Statesboro he was for the blacks.

I: Did he realize how poor or did he ask for consultation?

D: He asked one of us to come and help him but it was poor medicine. And he had an office.

I: Was it back down there behind Minkovitz?

D: No, it was back there behind where the health department is. He had a little hospital over there and he treated some patients there.

I: You did have a ward in the new hospital.

D: Yes, we had a ward in the new hospital and they were on the ground floor level. They were not on the white wards.

I: What about the black ward in the hospital? Did you have black nurses there or did you have white nurses?

D: We had some black nurses.

I: But the white nurses would attend the blacks then?

D: Oh yes.

I: And that was never any problem?

D: No. A good nurse knows no race boundaries. A top notch nurse would do anything and we had some great nurses.

I: When did you enter the service or when did it become apparent that you were going to have to go into the service?

- D:** It was July 11, 1942 and I will never forget it.
- I:** What was the progression or where did you go in?
- D:** I spent approximately two years in basic training.
- I:** Where did you take basic training?
- D:** I trained and and then from there I was transferred to an evacuation hospital- a type of field hospital- and then paratroops and then I was sent to the troops and then from there I was transferred to an evacuation hospital- you know, a type of field hospital- and went immediately overseas and served two years in Europe.
- I:** Tell me now about your service. Where did you land when- did you go by ship?
- D:** Oh yes, we went overseas on the Susan B. Anthony.
- I:** It was a passenger ship that had been converted?
- D:** It had been converted into a troop ship and we went over on the Susan B. Anthony.
- I:** What kind of a sailor were you?
- D:** Oh, it didn't bother me at all. She was converted and she was later torpedoed and later sunk off the shores of Normandy.
- I:** Were you a part of a convoy?
- D:** Yes, the maintenance crew was convoy. Prince Preston was in the same convoy but I didn't know it until later but we had one of the largest and as far as you could see you could see nothing but servicemen. We landed at Belfast, Ireland, and we stayed in Belfast for a while and were later transferred to a port there in southern England.
- I:** What kind of housing did you have in Belfast?
- D:** We lived in the Old Dumpsters Home. We confiscated the Old Dumpsters Home and we moved in. It was cold. Belfast has a cold but pleasant climate. It never froze. It would go around forty degrees but you couldn't get warm and the coal wouldn't burn.
- I:** What was the food like? Did you have GI rations?

- D:** Oh, it was no problem for a young man.
- I:** Did you have a cook in the house that cooked for you all?
- D:** Oh yes, we ate at mess halls. They had mess halls. The Army took very good care of all of us.
- I:** How long were you in Belfast?
- D:** I was in Belfast maybe six or eight months and transferred over to Englan.
- I:** Tell me about your work while you were in Belfast.
- D:** I was getting trainees for the unit ready to do the work.
- I:** For you that would be medical training.
- D:** Yes, medical trainees.
- I:** What form did that take?
- D:** It was Physical Education training. As I was saying, when I had some ski troops there and I was in excellent condition working in Colorado- working in altitudes of around nine, ten thousand feet. So you are in good condition. My Army experiences and I didn't like the Army and I didn't want to make a career out of it but they took care of their people.
- I:** Was plasma available then at this time?
- D:** It became available during World War II. We used a lot of plasma and we used some blood too.
- I:** But that was the first time you were introduced to the use of plasma, I guess, was during that time?
- D:** Yes, on a massive scale, but we had it before but it was hard to get it in the hospital.
- I:** When did you first use penicillin?
- D:** We got penicillin back in those days too. I forget exactly when it came in but the Army had penicillin.

- I:** You left Belfast and went to the southern coast of England. Do you recall where?
- D:** I have forgotten the name of that town. It was out in the country some place and we were confined because we were getting ready for an invasion and they were very secretive about it. You couldn't go away, let's say an area including a hundred yards around the I couldn't get out of there. They never gave any passes, you just stayed there for a couple of months at a time during the invasion.
- I:** What about mail during that time? Did you have any difficulty receiving mail from home?
- D:** No, we could get mail but they impounded our mail and censored all of it and let it go home only when they wanted it to. They sent some of mine home with sections cut out of it.
- I:** Did you feel that you knew what was up?
- D:** Sure, we felt something was big. There were- too many soldiers were in one place down there in southern England.
- I:** Now, what were your routine duties during these two months you were waiting?
- D:** Physical training and management- just practicing the things we needed to do.
- I:** Would you have sick calls for the troops that were stationed there?
- D:** Oh yes.
- I:** Were there any problems that developed from any kind of an epidemic?
- D:** Not that I recall.
- I:** What about sexually transmitted diseases? Was this a problem?
- D:** That was always a problem.
- I:** They used penicillin for the treatment of venereal diseases then, didn't they?
- D:** Yes.

- I: Did you ever have an occasion to see any top notch military leaders? Eisenhower?**
- D: Yes, we would see them at a distance but never really had any contact with them. When the invasion started, Eisenhower went to visit one unit and maybe shake hands with a couple of soldiers. They were prominent figures but we knew them. Like General Patton, the soldiers knew they would be looked after.**
- I: It was a war with a purpose too, don't you think?**
- D: Yes, we cursed the organization, but it was your army.**
- I: Where did you embark from when you crossed the channel? Do you remember from what port?**
- D: Portsmouth Yard and that is down in southern England. It was a little port down there and we embarked on the LST's.**
- I: Did you have a corpsman to carry along whatever equipment that you would need?**
- D: Oh yes, we had a corpsman with us. They were enlisted men and they were trained to first aid.**
- I: But they had fitted portable bags that you would take with you out?**
- D: Yes.**
- I: So you went prepared really for field care?**
- D: We went prepared for field care.**
- I: And you landed where?**
- D: We landed on Omaha Easy Red, the section was Easy Red.**
- I: But it was Omaha Beach?**
- D: Omaha Beach, Easy Red.**
- I: What was the crossing like? The channel is usually so rough.**
- D: That was but had a lot of storms. But that didn't bother me. I never had been seasick in my life.**

I: What was the landing like for the men?

D: It is an experience that you will never want to repeat.

I: Were the losses heavy among the men that you were with?

D: We lost much fewer men than the high command had anticipated. I think they anticipated around forty or fifty thousand. But it was far less than that. I think it was a little better than three thousand dead.

I: Did you have any immediate duties when you got there?

D: I didn't do much but just people off the beach on You can't treat people who have come off the ship. So we would get them off the beach and get them back to the LS unit. The LST's is where we would bring them back and then operate on them on the way back to England.

I: Did you go back and forth every time?

D: Yes, we went back and forth several times. I spent two weeks on the LST. The LST of course were only operating on the Navy and I had one young Navy surgeon on there to help me and I was the Army surgeon and then I had two army enlisted men to help me and we converted the Navy tank into a hospital and we put cots on it and made it a little roomier and the officer's ward room into an operating room and we operated on everybody in there.

I: How stable was that operating room?

D: It was sometimes rocky but we did it because those people had to be cared for. You had a job and that was the way it was set up.

I: What kind of anesthesia did you use in that situation?

D: I imagine some pentothal and ether.

I: That would have been intravenous and the ether would have been an inhalant?

D: Yes, but we had good anesthesia. We had good anesthesiologists. We had men who were trained for that. The Army did a magnificent medical job taking care of the men.

- I:** Was it an emotional shock for you to do the kind of work you did or was the urgency of the moment so that you didn't have time to think about it too much?
- D:** No, we didn't think about it. There was a job to be done and we just got very tired and it was almost twenty four hours a day. There was no let up during the campaign.
- I:** Did you use the French facilities at any time or did you just set up temporarily?
- D:** Whenever we found an old French school or a French hospital or a building that could be useful we would make use of it because it was better than tents.
- I:** Bird, what was your impression of the French people that you came in contact with? Did you come into contact with any French civilians during that time?
- D:** My wife is French- very happy go-lucky, lovable people.
- I:** Did you feel that you were well received by them?
- D:** I did. I found this to be true everywhere I have been. If you would say yes and please and thank you and conduct yourself properly, you would be treated properly.
- I:** Did you ever work with any French doctors along the way?
- D:** No, never any French doctors, but with a lot of French women and particularly the French underground. When we first went in we saw a lot of them and they acted as couriers and they acted as interpreters and they helped us in every way they could. I enjoyed the English.
- I:** Did you have any association with- those initial invasions? Were those primarily American and British? Were there any Poles among you, do you know?
- D:** Actually, we didn't have any among us but had some Poles. They had some free French and I don't know where they were but they each had their sectors and of course as you know, Eisenhower made very certain that the free French led us into Paris.
- I:** And were you among the troops that went to Paris?

D: Oh yes, we went to Paris one night about ten o'clock and Patton's army was going and I mean we rode.

I: So you didn't spend any time there?

D: No- didn't have any time when you were joining Patton.

I: What division was that?

D: We followed the Second Division. We followed the First and Second Divisions. Hospital units were assigned to areas and our area was usually behind the Second Division.

I: Was Patton- he was sort of a legend among his own men, wasn't he?

D: Yes.

I: Where did you progress from Paris?

D: We didn't stay in Paris. We went right on through and ended up in Luxembourg which is a beautiful little country.

I: Were you stationed at a hospital there?

D: Stationed at a hospital in Luxembourg.

I: When did you arrive in Luxembourg?

D: Dates and times meant nothing to me. You didn't even keep up with the days of the week. What difference did it make?

I: Was it around six months after you had been- ?

D: You don't know if it is a Sunday or a Tuesday. It was in the spring, though. The weather was spring.

I: So it was about six or eight months from-

D: But it was a rich experience.

I: About how long did you stay in Luxembourg? Did you stay there for a lengthy period of time or did you move into Germany?

D: Oh yes, I mean after the war ended I stayed there. But no, we had moved on over into Germany and we ended up in Regensburg, Germany. When the

war ended I was in Regensburg, Germany. It was one of the old walled cities. It was a medieval city located on the confluence of the Danube and the Regen Rivers. And we moved into a place on the banks of the Regen River and got hold of a number of canoes and after the war was over we had a lot of fun just fishing and boating on the Regen River and down the Danube and back. It was beautiful country.

I: Regensburg had not been bombed, had it?

D: No, the combat crew was shortly pulled out for a couple of months. Combat troops don't make good occupational troops because the feeling is too high. The hate is there and the troops train for ocquepella (?) work and then they sent us back to the states.

I: When did you return to the states?

D: I think it was in October of 1945.

I: Where were you when the war in Europe ended?

D: We were at Regensburg.

I: You had no association you said with the German people while you were there?

D: No, except that you had on occasion to go among them to try to find a soldier that may have been wounded and some of them were taken care of. But we had no association with the civilians at all.

I: Were you immediately demobilized when you came back to the states?

D: Yes, we came back to the states immediately. We were demobilized. We came in on the so-called "Green Plan." Well, when we came back to somewhere in southern France and I don't remember the name of the place, but we were sent there for a month or two waiting to get home. Finally when they shipped us on a train bound to the port in southern France- Marseilles. Anyway, when we got to Marseilles some general had outranked our commander and gotten our ship. He had put his outfit on the ship and sent them home. So we came back up on the train to southern France and then the so-called "Green Plan" on London Island and they flew us all home. It was the worst overseas flight I have ever made. We flew to the Azores and then I believe it was Nuggington (?) and then to the states.

I: When were you mustered out?

- D:** We came into New York, La Guardia, and then were flown down to Augusta and mustered out in Augusta. They brought us home and got us out. No, we didn't fly to Augusta; we came from New York to Augusta on a freight train.
- I:** Did you immediately resume your practice here alone or did you join with someone?
- D:** No, I was by myself.
- I:** Had Statesboro changed much in the four years that you were gone?
- D:** The big change is that we used to make house calls all over the county. After the war everybody came to the emergency room. There were no more house calls.
- I:** Did you incorporate these new medical techniques and so on that you learned in the Army?
- D:** The war has always been distinguished in medicine- the new techniques and the types of techniques and new inventions and new findings. We didn't have them before the war, we had them after the war.
- I:** What was your practice like? Was it pretty much the same practice that you had before?
- D:** The same practice yes, but a much better mass.
- I:** How long did you practice after you returned?
- D:** I quit practicing surgery in 1966 because I felt myself slowing down. I had practiced for forty years then and I felt like it wasn't fair to patients to give them less than I could on a one time deal. I quit surgery and continued to do office practice and then later on took care of the nursing homes until two or three years ago. Actually I practiced medicine for over fifty years.
- I:** When did you retire from your office practice?
- D:** When Whitlock and White came here. I was instrumental in bringing them here and they were capable. I worked with them for a year, transferred the practice to them and then got out and that was in 1966.
- I:** It was later than that wasn't it, because you doctored our family some. We didn't come here until 1967.
- D:** It must've been 1976.

- I:** Looking back, what were some of the most gratifying parts of your medical practice?
- D:** Oh, I had a long practice in medicine. I was trained as a surgeon at Grady Hospital and I didn't want to live in a large city. I couldn't stay in Atlanta so I came back to Savannah and finally came back to Claxton and I liked general practice- family medicine. I fell in love with and decided I wanted to be a family doctor. So I didn't want to go back to the city and I came to Statesboro.
- I:** Well, there are gratifications that you get from being a family doctor that you don't get from other areas, aren't there?
- D:** Oh, I had a ball practicing medicine. And I can say that I had a very rich experience and rich rewards.
- I:** You were involved in a number of civic activities too. Tell me about some of your civic activities over the years. I know that you were a Rotarian and you were on the Board of Education when we came here.
- D:** I was on the Board of Education for fifteen years and I was acting Chairman during the time that we integrated the schools and of course it was a great satisfaction to me that Bulloch County- none of us wanted to integrate the schools. At that time Bulloch County was a county of law abiding people and so we did what the law demanded from the court order. I think that we did a marvelous job and today the schools are better off for it. We didn't see it at the time but it is and I am real proud of it.
- I:** Were you one of the charter members of Rotary?
- D:** No, I am not a charter member. I came in- I think it was before the war and then again after the war. I came in 1939 or 1940.
- I:** Any other civic activities that you can remember?
- D:** I was chairman of the Human Relations and Regulations Committee.
- I:** Which is a community wide effort- is that what it was?
- D:** Yes
- I:** Integration?

D: We used to have some fast and furious debates and they would call them down there. But it served a useful purpose. It let people blow their tops.

I: Who were some of the blacks that you worked with during that period that you remember who were helping to achieve? Did you work with Amanda Smith at all?

D: Yes. There was Patrick Jones who worked with the NAACP and many people thought he was dumb. He was a very good man to work with. He and I kept in close touch with each other. He would keep me informed about what was going on so we could avoid trouble rather than take care of it as it came. D.W. Kent was one of the leaders.

I: Was he a minister?

D: Yes and he worked undercover.

(End of interview)