

The following interview is with Georgia S.B. Patterson, wife of ex-Washington County resident and ex-Governor of Oregon, Paul Patterson. The interview takes place at her apartment in Portland on September 29, 1978.

Mr. Patterson's career culminated in the governorship in 1952. He died in office in 1956. His career began in Washington County as the Deputy District Attorney under Bert Tongue, then District Attorney, during the 1920's. He is one of the very few Governors of the state from Washington County (Victor Atiyih is the most recent).

For an in-depth analysis of the history of the events of the time and of his career he would be the man to speak with. Unfortunately, his premature death prevents anyone from doing so. I did talk with the person that was closest person to him for 29 years, Mrs. Paul Patterson.

In the interview she talks of the events of their lives together, his law profession, and his civic career. Although the interview is not as informative as one might hope, it still gives a sense of feeling the people and the times he lived and worked in.

INDEX TO TAPE

- 0-10 Interviewer's introduction. Mrs. Patterson's family history. Family in the logging industry. Born in 1901 and spent much of her childhood in Portland.
- 10-20 Childhood years. Schooling, boarding school, University of Oregon.
- 20-30 Marriage to Paul Patterson, 1927. Couple moved to Hillsboro and lived there until Paul appointed Governor in 1952.
- 30-40 Personal and family history of Paul Patterson, lawyer, legislator, and ex-governor.
- 40-50 University of Oregon Law School student. PP working in Hillsboro as Deputy District Attorney under Bert Tongue.
- 50-60 Prosecuting alcohol cases during Prohibition. Events and cases during his tenure as Deputy District Attorney. Social activities for the "elite" in Hillsboro. The Hillsboro American Legion.
- 60-70 P.P. entering private law practice during the 1930's.

TRACK 2

- 0-10 Discussion of cases of the Thirties. City attorney for Hillsboro and Beaverton. Wrote contracts as part of the Works and Public Administration (WPA)
- 10-20 Stories of life during the Depression.
- 20-30 WPA Projects.
- 30-40 Paul Patterson entering the State Legislature in 1944.
- 40-50 Three terms as a State senator. Discussion of the Republican leanings of Washington County.
- 50-60 P.P. political philosophy. A moderate Republican. Large governmental expenditures for social problems was not a priority. Issues of the day. P.P. served on a number of committees, i.e. the dairy industry, State Employees Retirement program, committee of Municipal Affairs, Highway Committee, Education Committee, Judiciary, Agriculture.
- 60-70 Growth of Washington County after World War II. Miscellaneous comments.

INDEX TO TAPE
MRS. PAUL PATTERSON

TRACK 3

- 0-10 The Governorship of Paul Patterson (1952-1956) Became Governor as a result of Being President of the Senate when the governor at the time (Doug McKay) was appointed as Secretary of the Interior.
- 10-20 Political ideals. Dieing in office of heart attack.
- 20-30 Political allignments and strongholds around the county.
- 30-40 The role of the Governor's wife. The issue of Liguor control, organized labor and organized crime.
- 40-50 Labor movement in Oregon Concluding remarks.

"First Ladies of Oregon"
with Mrs. Paul Patterson
interview taped - 1960

Page 1

Mrs. Patterson, while you are well known throughout the state, please tell us something of your parents, where you were born and your early childhood.

May, I was born January 9, 1901 in Portland, Oregon although my parents Amos Ciril Benson and Georgia Rebeccah Bosley were residents of the State of Washington at that time. My mother, a native of Tillamook County died 5 days later. My father, a native of Wisconsin soon returned to Oregon and in 1902 married Ethyl Chambers of Portland. Until that time, I lived with my mothers sister, Louella Sutton. Our home then became aah..... in Clatskanie... moved to Clatskanie, Oregon near the operations of the Benson Logging & Lumber Company in Oregon and Washington. For a short time we lived at Oak Point, Washington where our home overlooked the Columbia River; in both places we had many trips to the camps and the logging trains. On one such occasion after my father, my sister rather, Esther and I had had our hair cut short and were wearing overalls, a new cook asked my father if he had two sons as well as the two daughters who had been with him recently. On another trip, it was made in a rented surrey with the return trip at night, when we children were certain the wild animals would get us.

Our Clatskanie home had a porch all the way around it where we loved to race our tricycles which were the longer styles of that time. I recall that my father, when my father had his mustache removed Esther did not recognize him.

In 1908 we moved to be near Portland. As my parents wanted acreage for a cow and view of the river with oceangoing ships they settled in St. Johns which was a separate city. The house is still there on a bluff, a little west of the railroad bridge and that time above the drydocks.

After renting a house the first winter, we lived in two housetents for the summer while our home was being built. We had a special play area enclosed by a circular driveway and just inside the pavement was a border of Caroline-Tester roses which were so popular at that time.
(Testo)

My father and my Grandfather, Simon Benson decided to have good roads as a hobby. Two projects, besides the Columbia River Highway, which were closer to home, were the paving of Willamette Blvd. and establishing and paving the Greely cutoff.

Before any through routes were paved out to St. Johns, cars had to be jacked up for the winter by using styrup -jacks at the end of each axle.

It is so interesting to hear these various inci-^{dents} in your early life that only you could tell about. Now may we hear something of your school days, the schools you attended and soforth.

Before we moved to St. Johns, my stepmother taught me to read, print and do simple arithmetic. I recall doing the multiplication tables and reciting the alphabet backwards for my father.

Formal schooling began at St. Johns Central where there were many memorable occasions.

Civil War veterans came each year for a Memorial Day program, a favorite among them was a Negro veteran. When we heard he had died, we all cried. Calisthenics were spiced with weekly drills to music in the large central hall used for an assembly room also. When my class was old enough for Indian clubs I was a leader because I had learned to swing them when I was much younger. We liked marching to and from our rooms to music at the opening and close of the day and at recess times. Fire drills were exciting and well organized. We were proud of our speed and order. But when the school burned many years later it was at night.

In 1915 I moved to Portland. I made my home with my father's sister Carolyn Unander but attended school for the 8th grade and highschool at the college of Notre Dame in San Jose, California. I spent my Christmas vacations with my grandfather in Long Beach, California.

In 1918, during the flu epidemic, we had a whole month for Christmas and I did not even have a cold. Until Aunt Carolyn bought a home we spent most of our summers in HoodRiver or at Seaside but in 1921 I had a summer vacation in Europe.

I registered at the University of Oregon in the Fall of 1920, the large classes were a bit frightening after the small ones at boarding school. I majored in economics with average grades and a modest amount of dating. My activities were varied, culminating in the Presidency of what is now the Associated Womens Students. I graduated in 1924 with a Batchelor of Arts degree in spite of an EMERGENCY apendectomy just a month before the close of school.

That Fall I went to Business College to learn typing and shorthand in preparation for the position as secretary to the Dean of Women at the University. She was Virginia Judy Easterly. I worked for the calendar years of 1925 and 1926. As the position was half-time at first I worked on the University Catalogue half-time for two months. That period of fellow-employee relationship with the faculty made it easier to know them on a basis other than that of student.

Be that as it may, Pat and I never felt old just because we visited the campus. We loved to return for social events, football games and committee assignments. I am now permanent secretary for my class and I am on alumni committees.

Wasn't it about this time that you met your husband?

Yes it was May; at the first studentbody meeting my freshman year a young man jumped upon the stage to report for the then existing greater Oregon committee. Through the remaining college years we saw each other but we never became close friends.

However, in 1925 I was advisor to the Hostess Committee at the University for the National Conference of Associated Women Students.

The chairman had reserved two of the prominent men from those being assigned guests for the dance. I told her to take her choice and I would ask the other. After that, Pat took the initiative for dating.

Two years later on May 16, 1927, Paul Linnton Patterson and I were married at the home of my aunt in Portland. Paul was Deputy District Attorney for Washington County.

He lived in Hillsboro where he rented a house just before the wedding and we settled there after our honeymoon up the MacKenzie River. Hillsboro was Pat's legal home until his death and except for one year at Cedar Hills was mine until September, 1959 when I moved moved to Portland

We have three children, two daughters and a son.

Georgia Cyril or 'Patsy' was born April 17, 1928. She lives in Ventura, California where her husband John Waynesmissen ?? _____ teaches at the college. They have a daughter and two sons.

Our son, Paul jr., was born November 12, 1930 and is now studying for a Doctorate in Mathematics at Stanford on a fellowship from Lockheed. He works part time for Lockheed in their missile research department. He and his wife Janet Hamron ? _____ have a son, Paul Linnton, called Tad.

Virginia Lee, Ginny or Ginx, was born October 16, 1932.

Her husband Fred Rollard ? _____ works in the Research Dept. at Boeing/Seattle. They have two daughters and a son.

May

At this point, I would like to say, Mr. Patterson did practice law in Hillsboro for 26½ years and served two terms as State Senator before the time he became Govenor, is that correct?

Yes. Paul was president of the Senate. When he became Govenor December 17, 1952 when Douglas McKay resigned to become Secretary of The Interior under President Eisenhower.

We moved to Salem, January 5th, when we sub-let an apartment at the Lea Apartments because the house we were to rent later was occupied by a legislator. In March we moved into the house at 426 N. Winter Street. It is located in the Mall and is now used for a section of the Dept. of Education.

We were living there when my husband died, January 31, 1956 in Portland.

During the three years that we lived in Salem, there were numerous outstanding occasions. Without evaluating them, a few which come to mind were the campaign and election of 1954.

The innaugural in 1955, the marriage of Ginny and Jim on July 17, 1955 and the innaugural of President Eisenhower in 1952, and his dedication of McNarry Dam;

the Govenor's conferences and meeting old acquaintances and new ones in Salem at conferences and in their own communities.

Then there was a three month's bout with hepatitis in 1955.

May. Well, Mrs. Patterson, besides your domestic duties, what other activities have you had?

I'm not an inveterate joiner but I do appreciate the benefits of group activity. Immediately after starting to work, I joined the American Association of University Women and I'm still a member.

In Hillsboro I joined the American Legion Auxillary and I'm a Charter Member of the Hillsboro Garden Club.

Other organizations to which I belong are Gamma Phi Beta Sorority, Coffee Club, YWCA for which I am Treasurer and represent on the boards of the City and State USO. The Federation of Republican Women's Club, The Oregon Heart Association and the Boys and Girls Aid Society.

I am on the Boards of the Easter Seal Society,

The Rehabilitation Center and the Theater Arts Association.

I am a life member of The University of Oregon Allumni Association and the University of Oregon Mothers Club. I have been a member of The Oregon State and Stanford Mothers Clubs.

I belonged to the League of Women Voters before the war. However, the organization to which I gave the most hours was PTA at local, county and state levels. I served nine years on the State Board of Education and I am now on the National Advisory Committee for the White House Conference on Aging to be held in January, 1961. I led CampFire and 4-H groups. The latter for both boys and girls.

Since leaving Salem I resumed active participation in some of the above and some of them were joined ~~since then, and~~.

I do take trips to see my children, relatives and friends.

My relaxing and creative hobbies are gardening, leather work, reading listening to music, bridge and just visiting with friends.

Well, thank you so much Mrs. Patterson for granting us this interview. Your main interests appear to be civic ones dealing with people for people which gives you and may give other participants a worthwhile purpose for living.