Dr. George B. Lynch, interviewed by Dr. Louis D. Silveri at the home of Dr. Lynch in Brevard, N.C., July 19, 1977.

Dr. Louis D. Silveri: These articles indicate that you are a native of this area.

Dr. George B. Lynch: Yes.

Silveri: Born in Fairview in 1887.

Lynch: January 11, 1887.

Silveri: I like to have the people I interview tell me how far back they can trace their ancestry in the mountains here in North Carolina.

Lynch: My father... was born and raised at Fairview. That is just out from Asheville. Of course, he was born in Rutherford County, but he lived in Fairview, and that is where he met his wife... and all of his children were born in Fairview. That's 'way back years and years ago.

Silveri: What about his father, your grandfather?

Lynch: He lived in Rutherford County. I think you will find it all in that article there.

Silveri: Your grandfather was the one who owned slaves, was he?

Lynch: Yes.

Silveri: And he was a prosperous plantation owner?

Lynch: Yes; he owned a lot of land up and down Broad River in Rutherford County.

Silveri: What did he raise?
Lynch: He was a farmer.
Silveri: How many slaves did he own? Do you know?
Lynch: I don't know.
Silveri: Do you know if he fought in the Civil War?
Lynch: I'm not sure if there's anything in there about that.
Silveri: You mentioned that... 
Lynch: I don't believe he did.
Silveri: Prior to the War Between the States, he had owned slaves and extensive plantations, and afterward became a man of affairs at Rutherfordton, where he died. Your father, George W. Lynch, was born on the plantation at Rutherford County... 
Lynch: That's right.
Silveri: ... in July of 1848, but then when he grew up he came to Fairview. Was that before or after he was married?
Lynch: That was about the time he was married.
Silveri: Why did he come to Fairview?
Lynch: I don't know. I guess his wife lived in Fairview... that's how he came to Fairview. He met her and was married at Fairview.
Silveri: So he took up farming there at Fairview.
Lynch: Yes.
Silveri: And that's where you were born. How many children in your family?
Lynch: Four; three boys and one girl.
Silveri: And you spent your early life in Fairview?
Lynch: Yes.

Silveri: Growing up in Fairview?

Lynch: Yes.

Silveri: You went to school there?

Lynch: Yes; graduated from Fairview High School in 1905.

Silveri: If you were born in 1887, then you must have gone to school there in 1893 or '92, when you were five or six years old. Do you remember the first year you went to school?

Lynch: I remember the first day.

Silveri: What kind of school was it?

Lynch: It was a graded school, I guess you'd call it, and developed into a high school.

Silveri: Was it a small school?

Lynch: No; it was a fairly big school, a big brick building.

Silveri: Was it on the main road? Was it the Charlotte Highway that went through there?

Lynch: Yes; the Charlotte Highway went through Fairview.

Silveri: What kind of work did your father do? Did he have a . . .

Lynch: He was a farmer.

Silveri: A farmer. What did he raise?

Lynch: Corn and wheat and potatoes and just general.

Silveri: What was his cash crop? Did he have a cash crop?

Lynch: I guess, corn; corn and wheat.

Silveri: Is the house that he had still in Fairview?
Lynch: No; our home where I was born was burned. We lost everything we had in that fire, practically. One brother and Mother were there, and they hardly had enough clothing left after the fire.

Silveri: What year was that?

Lynch: That was in... she mentioned...

Silveri: Do you remember the fire?

Lynch: No; I was in school in Baltimore at the time.

Silveri: So you were away.

Lynch: I was away.

Silveri: I just wanted to know about how old you were when the fire took place.

Lynch: I was in school, medical school, in Baltimore. My mother was Elmira Minerva Thomas. She was born in Fairview and died January 11, 1925. I think you will find all of that in there. I don't think she mentioned about the fire.

Silveri: Is she any relation to the Thomas' of Asheville? The Thomas Orthopedic Hospital?

Lynch: No... Well, anyway, I don't think she mentioned about the fire, but the house was burned.

Silveri: Do you remember your first grade teacher?

Lynch: No; I don't.

Silveri: How far away was the school from your house?

Lynch: About three miles.
Silveri: Did you walk that?

Lynch: We walked every day, to school and back. My sister, the first day of school, I went with my sister and she kept me right with her that whole day. Everywhere she went, I had to go.

Silveri: When you were growing up, when you were a youngster, how often did you come into Asheville?

Lynch: Oh, every week or so we'd go, my father and mother, and of course that was before automobiles and we'd drive with a team to Asheville and spend the day. It was a day's trip when we'd go.

Silveri: As you were growing up you did chores around on the farm. Right?

Lynch: Yes.

Silveri: You continued schooling at Fairview and you graduated from high school?

Lynch: Yes.

Silveri: What did you do then?

Lynch: After I graduated from high school, I went then to medical school in Baltimore.

Silveri: Why did you do that?

Lynch: Well, I had a brother that had graduated in medicine and was in practice in Baltimore at the time. So he talked me into it, I guess, partly, and I think I had a little hankering for medicine, so I decided to go to Baltimore.

Silveri: In addition to your brother's influence, what other influence was there?
Lynch: None that I know of.

Silveri: None that you know of.

Lynch: Just my own.

Silveri: Now in those years you went right into medical school from high school?

Lynch: Went right from high school to medical school. I remember I went with my brother to the dean and talked to the dean, and told him that I hadn't... that I was just out of high school and wanted to enter medical school.

He said, "That's a little unusual without further training."

He said, "I'll have to give you an examination first."

So he put me through a rather stiff examination before I could enter medical school. After that was done, he said, "Well, we are going to accept you as a student in medicine."

Silveri: What was the name of the university, of the medical school?

Lynch: University of Maryland.

Silveri: Oh, in Baltimore.

Lynch: In Baltimore.

Silveri: You studied there for how many years?

Lynch: Four years. I could have graduated in three years, but I decided, due to the fact that I didn't have the training before, that I'd just take the four... full four years.

Silveri: So when you graduated with a medical degree, you were 22 years old?
Lynch: I imagine, around that, I don't know exactly.
Silveri: And that was in 1909?
Lynch: About 1909.
Silveri: About 1909; and then you took an internship in Baltimore?
Lynch: Two years at St. Joseph's Hospital in Baltimore.
Silveri: And then, what did you do after that?
Lynch: After I finished the internship at St. Joseph's I came home to Fairview and stayed home for a little while, and then went in practice with my brother in Asheville. But I hadn't had the State Board, so one of the members of the State Board of Examiners gave me an examination, Dr. Stevens, in Asheville. He was a member of the State Board. He gave me an examination and he said, "I'll give you a temporary license to practice until you take the State Board."

Well, I practiced about a year with my brother in Asheville, and I decided I wanted to study orthopedics, that I wanted to be my specialty.

So I decided on orthopedics, and wrote to the hospital in Baltimore, Kernan Hospital for Crippled Children, to know if they had an internship. Well, right away I got a letter from Dr. Taylor, who was Chief of Staff there, and he said, "Can you come right at once?" And I told him I could. So I went to Baltimore and took two years as Superintendent of Kernan Hospital for Crippled Children.

Silveri: Two years there; and then what did you do after that?
Lynch: While I was there, of course, that was when the war
Lynch: (Cont'd.) came along, World War I, and I knew that I would be
subject to draft, and I did not want to be drafted, so I volunteered,
but was turned down on account of an arm... that's as far as I can
bend my arm. They say it's been broken.

Well, they turned me down when I volunteered, but I knew
that the draft would still probably get me, so I talked it over with
Dr. Taylor, my chief there at Baltimore at the Kernan Hospital.

He said, "Why don't you get on the train and go to see
the Surgeon General in Washington?" Which I did.

He said, "Why were you turned down?"

I told him.

He said, "Take your coat off and let me see what you can
do with that arm."

He made me go through all kinds of things. Of course,
I have to use my wrist to get to my youth, you see. I remember he
was sitting in a swivel chair just like I have there, and he spun
around and said to his secretary, "Take this man in the army, we
can't keep him out on that."

So then I was inducted into the service. But due to
the fact that most of the doctors had gone from Baltimore at that
time, I mean, from the hospital, Dr. Taylor asked the Surgeon General:
"Now if we take him there will be no doctor left to take care of
about 85 or 100 crippled children here at the hospital." He said,
"I'd like for you to leave Dr. Lynch as long as possible."
Lynch: (Cont'd.) That was 'way long the first of the year. So they left me until, I think it was along the latter part of 1918, they finally called me into the service. So I went to Camp Greenleaf for about five or six weeks. That was during the epidemic of flu, and so many of the men died. They just piled up one on top of the other.

Silveri: At the camp?

Lynch: At the camp, Camp Greenleaf.

Silveri: Where is that located?

Lynch: Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.

Silveri: Yes.

Lynch: Well, anyway, I finished my training there, and then I was assigned to duty at Fort McPherson, Georgia; still assigned to the orthopedic division, and I stayed in the army then until I was discharged. I think it gives you the date that I was discharged.

Silveri: Yes.

Lynch: I then came home, back to Fairview, to my mother's home. In the meantime we had re-built the home that was burned. We had built another home there, so I stayed there until, I guess, December 7, 1919 . . . I was married to Ada May Willison of Cumberland, Maryland.

I stayed at home there with my mother for a little while. One Sunday afternoon my brother came and said, "The Red Cross has found that you are just out of the army and not in practice yet. The flu situation is so bad in Rosman and Brevard, would you go to Rosman and Brevard and help the doctors out with the flu situation for a little while?"
Lynch: (Cont’d.) So I did. I left one Sunday afternoon. It was pouring down rain, and cold. I drove to Pisgah Forest and spent the night there at Pisgah Forest with Mr. Ed Patton.

While we were eating supper someone knocked at the door and said, "We understand that we have a doctor up here from Asheville, or from Fairview, and my wife's in labor and I can't get a doctor. Would he go and deliver my wife?"

So, of course, I didn't know anything about the country, and there was a man there, Ed McCoy, said, "I'll drive you to this man's house." So he took me over to this man's house and I delivered the baby and came back.

Then I stayed about two or three weeks in Brevard and then went on to Rosman and stayed two or three weeks up there, which the Red Cross paid me for. So after that was over I came back to my mother's home.

But while in Rosman, Mr. Silverstein, who had Silverstein's Industries, Lumber Company and Tanning Extract, and so forth, he got after me to come to Rosman to practice.

I said, "Mr. Silverstein, I don't want to come to Rosman, a small town."

He said, "Well, come for a few months, anyway, and help us out."

I said, "Well, I'll consider it." I went back to my home and finally decided to go help them out for a little while. Instead of
Lynch: (Cont'd.) that, I stayed about four years in Rosman practice, country practice.

Silveri: Oh, Rosman is a little town...

Lynch: ... is a little town about ten miles above here, between here and Lake Toxaway.

Silveri: And they were doing a lot of lumbering up in that region.

Lynch: Yes; Mr. Silverstein was in the lumber business and the tanning extract business, for tanning.

Silveri: You worked for him and also...

Lynch: I didn't work for him, I worked on my own, but I was taking care of his employees, so to speak.

Silveri: I see. I see.

Lynch: He employed a lot of help, you know, men that worked in this tannery and sawmill.

Silveri: So, in those four years you must have gone out and around the country side.

Lynch: Oh, I went every where, all over the country. At that time there were no roads hardly except just dirt roads, so to speak, very few paved roads.

Silveri: How did you get around? On horseback?

Lynch: Every way: horseback, and walked, and used a car when I could. Sometimes I'd have to hire a man with a Ford, a little Ford car, to take me to these places. I couldn't get there on account of the road.

Silveri: What were the major health problems that you encountered in those four years?
Lynch: That was during the flu situation. That was the reason I went, because the doctors there. . . there was only one doctor and he was just worked down. He couldn't take care of all the calls he'd get. So that's the reason I decided to go and help out for a while. Instead of that, after I got into practice I stayed about four years. At the end of that time I decided that I'd come to Brevard, so I came then to Brevard and entered practice here in Brevard.

Silveri: What year was that?
Lynch: That was in. . . four years. . . that was about 1924 or '25.

Silveri: What were some of your major medical duties in those four years at Rosman? After the flu epidemic was over, what were some of the health problems of the mountain people you attended?

Lynch: Well, of course, they didn't have medical help, only one doctor. Sometimes they'd have to send all the way to Brevard to get a doctor, or maybe adjoining counties, because the doctor couldn't take care of all the calls that he'd get. And that is, as I say, the reason that I went to help out.

Silveri: Where was the closest hospital to Rosman?

Lynch: I believe that a Dr. Stokes here in Brevard had a little hospital. That was the nearest one. And, of course, Sylva, in Jackson County, was across the mountain. They had a hospital.

Silveri: Was there very much typhoid, or anything like that?

Lynch: Very little typhoid at that time. Of course, it was just general practice: deliveries and flu situation, and just general practice.
Silveri: Did you encounter any disease problems because of bad nutrition?

Lynch: Yes, of course, the people back then didn't have the proper food, and there was that problem.

Silveri: What would you encounter? Any pellagra?

Lynch: Well, yes, found some pellagra, and of course with no deliveries, I had to take... I couldn't find my cases and do them at home. As I stated in that article, sometimes I'd go and maybe spend a day or two or a night because I couldn't go and come on account of the roads. When I'd get a call, I'd go, and if the woman wasn't to be delivered, maybe, 'till the next day, I'd have to spend the night.

On one occasion, I remember, they called me and said they had a midwife for the confinement case, and twin babies. The midwife had delivered the first baby and she couldn't deliver the second, so they said they'd have to have a doctor, and would I go? Well, I went and examined the woman and found that she had one arm born and that the other part of the baby couldn't be born, and I told them the baby was dead and said that his wife was practically unconscious. She had been in labor for about a couple of days.

The midwife had tried to deliver her and couldn't, naturally, so I called the husband off and talked to him. I said, "Now your wife is going to die if this baby isn't delivered. Your baby is already dead and your wife is practically unconscious now, but I won't take the responsibility because I don't know how much examining this midwife has done, and it is a possibility she may
Lynch: (Cont'd.) "Develop a bad infection, and I won't take that responsibility without you will release me from all responsibility. I will deliver the baby if I can." Of course, there were no lights, only lamp light. I said, "I'll try to deliver your baby if I can, but I won't take any responsibility for the results."

He said, "Well, go ahead."

Well, I did what we call a "version and extraction"; I got the arm back and turned the baby and got the foot and delivered it feet first. Well, the wife didn't know when it was delivered, didn't have to give her any anesthetic at all, she was so near gone. Well, anyway, I delivered the baby and went on back home. But before I left I said, "Now you let me know the next day how your wife is. Anyway, two days later." Because I kind of expected, maybe, a bad infection. Well, I didn't hear anything for two or three days.

Several days... Oh, not too many days, four, five or six days, I was walking up the streets in Brevard one day and I met this woman on the street.

I said, "What in the world are you doing down here, walking the streets?"

She said, "Oh, I feel all right, and I had to come to town." She had no trouble whatever, and was up in just a few days and walking the streets. So that was one of the experiences I had in Rosman.

Silveri: You mentioned about the other doctor, that he had so
Silveri: (Cont'd.) much to do. Was he still there when you were there... the four years?

Lynch: Yes.

Silveri: What was his name?

Lynch: English.

Silveri: You must have had a lot of calls up at the lumber camp, a lot of accidents?

Lynch: Well, not too many accidents; they had very few accidents, so to speak. They had some few. One, I remember, died; it was from an accident. I think he caught his hand under... anyway, he had a bad infection and he died.

Silveri: What about trichoma? Did you see much tricoma in those years?

Lynch: Very little then. Of course, didn't know too much about it; it wasn't one of the prominent things at that time.

Silveri: So then you moved to Brevard, because... Well, why? Why did you move to Brevard?

Lynch: I thought Brevard was a naturally bigger town, and we had Dr. Stokes' Hospital, and I came here and practiced for a few years. Dr. Summey, Tom Summey, was a practicing physician here at that time; a good friend of mine, so he talked me into going in with him and buying Dr. Stokes' hospital, which we did. But he had his out on the Greenville highway, called Riverside. After we bought him out, there was a large building vacant in Brevard which we
Lynch: (Cont'd.) converted to a hospital. At that time I didn't know that Dr. Summey had in mind leaving Brevard and going to Morristown, New Jersey, to practice. Otherwise, I wouldn't have gone, wouldn't have attempted this by myself. But after I had gone into it and entered the contract to buy the hospital... of course, we, me and my wife, moved in the hospital.

She was a graduate nurse, so she assumed the responsibility of head nurse and we just had a room there in the hospital. Shortly after that Dr. Summey left and it was during the depression, and everything was just, you know, rock bottom, so to speak.

We kept the hospital about five years. I found that I couldn't make it by myself; couldn't pay the bills and keep up the payments on the hospital, and so forth, so I decided to give it up.

I think Dr. Lyday then, and Dr. . . . I don't know. . . I guess then they decided they'd build a new hospital after I gave it up. I went on into practice; private practice.

Silveri: What was the name of your hospital?

Lynch: Transylvania Community Hospital.

Silveri: I see. But there was no... a private hospital, as long as you had it? There was no community involvement in that. Is that right?

Lynch: Well, it was private in a way, but it was for the community. That's the reason it was called the community hospital, but they had no, you might say, regard to management of the hospital.
Silveri: So you got out of that some time in the middle thirties?

Lynch: Yes.

Silveri: And opened private practice in Brevard?

Lynch: That's right.

Silveri: And that's where you've been ever since?

Lynch: That's where I've been ever since, and my private practice has been here after I left the hospital. I practiced for a number of years, and in 1937, I believe it was, or around that, Dr. . . . Oh, let's see what his name was. . . . just a minute. . . .

Silveri: That's all right, we can check it out.

Lynch: Well, anyway, he got after me to go to Chapel Hill and take a course in public health, which I did. I took the course and graduated in public health in Chapel Hill. I think it was September, October, November and December. I took four months for the course in Chapel Hill in public health. So then I gave up my practice here in Brevard and was Transylvania Health Officer for four years.

Silveri: Oh, that was a full time job.

Lynch: Dr. C.N. Sisk was the district supervisor. He had four counties: Haywood, Transylvania, Jackson and Macon. Of course, I was the health officer for Transylvania, but on certain days of the week I'd go help out in other counties, especially during school examinations, examining for school children. So I'd go and maybe spend two days in Jackson County and two in Macon, and visit all the schools. I've visited every school in those counties.
Silveri: Oh.
Lynch: And the same in this county.
Silveri: What were some of the main problems children had in those years?
Lynch: Oh, well, scabies, and body lice and sore throats. Things of that type.
Silveri: You did that for four years?
Lynch: I did that for four years.
Silveri: What other duties did the County Health Officer have?
Lynch: During that time I was appointed examining physician for the county board of...
Silveri: ...examining physician for the Transylvania County Local Board Number One, North Carolina...
Lynch: So I examined the draftees.
Silveri: Oh, I see... during the Second World War.
Lynch: I did over a thousand blood tests for men that were going in the service.
Silveri: Was this a full time position?
Lynch: No. Well, it was full time, so to speak, but at the same time I was doing my health work.
Silveri: I see.
Lynch: But the boys that were drafted, they would send them to me for their preliminary examinations. [Dr. Silveri and Dr. Lynch appear to be examining some papers] I got those: one from Truman, one from Roosevelt. I kept that about seven years.
Silveri: ... Selective Service System, Certificate of Service:
"Honorably served as examining physician in Selective Service System of
the United States from October 13, 1940 to March 31, 1947."

Lynch: There's one from Truman and one from Roosevelt, saying
practically the same thing. Then the Congress sent me this with a
service medal. That was from the Congress of the United States.

Silveri: That was after... You were not County Health Officer
then?

Lynch: Yes; I was still County Health Officer.

Silveri: Still County Health Officer?

Lynch: Yes.

Silveri: While you were doing all this, what other duties did you
have? Examining children, and the County Health Officer... What else?

Lynch: Well, of course, I was over the Sanitarian. We had a
Sanitarian, and I'd visit with him and his problems... have somebody...
For instance, he'd have a question about the restaurant. It had to
meet certain requirements; and sanitation was a county... and water...

Silveri: I'd like to ask you if there were any Red Cross nurses
that came down here in this part of the country?

Lynch: I don't know; I couldn't answer that.

Silveri: Did you ever hear of anybody named Margaret Harry?
Margaret Harry was a Red Cross Public Health Nurse in Highlands,
North Carolina.

Lynch: No; I didn't know her.
Silveri: Did you ever hear of Lydia M. Holman?
Lynch: The name sounds familiar, but I don't remember her.
Silveri: Lydia M. Holman Association was started by Miss Holman in 1900 in Western North Carolina, and for one or two years there was a nursing association, but it didn't last too long. But you don't know any of them?
Lynch: No.
Silveri: Then during the war you examined draftees. What else? Did you have private practice during the war?
Lynch: No; I couldn't practice while I was health officer. After I resigned from the health office... Now, that's the reason that I got out of health work. The people in Brevard... they were short of doctors, and there was so much sickness, flu, and so forth. I don't know whether they ever got up the petition or not, but they talked of getting up a petition to send to the, I guess, to the health office, to ask me to be released so I could go back in private practice. But anyway, I don't know whether they ever got the petition or not, but I resigned from the health office and went back into private practice.
Silveri: That was what year? Forty-seven?
Lynch: That was about four years I was in office; Health Officer. About four years.
Silveri: So you went back to private practice during the Second World War?
Lynch: Yes.
Silveri: You continued your private practice until you retired... In what year?

Lynch: I retired about three years ago.

Silveri: Just three years ago?

Lynch: Yes. During that time after I resigned from public health work the county was short of doctors. Doctors had gone into service. You know, the younger doctors. They had gone into service. Dr. Stokes and I then did practically all the surgery that was done in Transylvania County. Occasionally we'd have cases that we'd have to send to Asheville or to other hospitals, but the majority of the surgery, we did.

Silveri: In the hospital in Brevard?

Lynch: Yes.

Silveri: How many beds did the hospital have?

Lynch: I guess around fifty at that time. They had built the new hospital, and I imagine they had about fifty beds, maybe more.

Silveri: And you say...

Lynch: ... of course, that has been re-built. Now they have a new building down on #64, just beyond Brevard here. They have over a hundred beds, I guess; one hundred and fifty beds, possibly.

Silveri: So you continued to have a private practice until you were eighty-seven years old?

Lynch: Yes; about three years ago.

Silveri: How do you retire? What do you do: sell your practice to another physician?
Lynch: No; I just quit. In fact of the matter, I wish I could sell the nice equipment I have. The reason that I...Well, of course, that was before my wife died...but my wife was an invalid for quite a number of years. I had to give up my office up town. I moved. I had a little office here in my house, and I have some nice office equipment I wish I could dispose of, but new doctors come along, younger doctors. They want the latest in equipment, you know, push-button type. So I still have my office equipment I'd like to sell, but I can't dispose of it and I don't know what I'm going to do when I have to give up this house. Somebody's going to have to do something with it before I can sell the house.

Silveri: A doctor can practice as long as he wants. Is that right?

Lynch: Yes.

Silveri: As long as he keeps his license up?

Lynch: As long as he keeps his license.

Silveri: Were you ever associated in private practice with another doctor?

Lynch: Not to say associated, except during the time we were in hospital. Dr. Summey and I practiced together, but we really weren't associated in general practice, it was more hospital practice.

Silveri: What year did you bring your office into the house?

Lynch: Oh, I guess it was...my wife died in '69...I guess it was around '65; no '63 or '64, somewhere around that.
Silveri: To what do you attribute your long and healthy life? Your ancestry?

Lynch: I guess. It seems that on the Lynch side they all lived to be pretty old... I guess just general good health. I had good general health until 1946. I had a severe operation in Winston Salem at the Baptist Hospital; had about eight inches of my colon removed. In 1946 I had a ruptured appendix and was in the Mission Hospital. Well, from then it seems that my health kind of went down, so to speak, and I wasn't in as good health as I had been up to that time. But, as you see, I'm 90 years old and still able to drive my car and get around and do things, and I mow my lawn, and so forth.

Silveri: That's good. I noticed... Is that your car parked out front?

Lynch: Yes.

Silveri: What year is that?

Lynch: That's a '52.

Silveri: And it's still going good?

Lynch: Still going good. Hasn't got but about, oh, about less than 30,000 miles on it.

Silveri: Wow!

Lynch: The reason for that was: after my wife came here, you see, I didn't make house calls like I did prior to that when I had my office up town. So I didn't use my car too much because I had to be here with my wife. That's the reason I moved my office here.
Silveri: That car's twenty-five years old. What do you do for parts for it? How about parts?

Lynch: Well, it's hard to get parts, for this reason: its age. Don't you see? Several years ago, vandalism... I had trouble with vandals. Broke out my glass. Just driving by and pitched a rock in, just for meanness. Broke out the big glass in the back. They first broke the glass in the door on the left hand side, driver's side; broke those out first. Next they broke the windshield; threw a beer can at that and broke the windshield. Then one night I heard this car. I'd report it each time to the police department and they were on the lookout trying to catch these boys. So one night I parked my car where I could see it from my bed, bedroom. I heard this car go down the street making a lot of noise, like he was driving in second to kind of muffle what was going on. So he drove down the street and turned and came back. As he came back he pitched a rock, about so big, in the back and broke out the big glass in the back.

So the police had been on the lookout and they were coming up behind them. They didn't know they had done this, but they were coming up behind them. A boy next door heard it and he knew what was going on so he ran and called the police department after he heard this noise. I heard it, too, and I jumped up and ran to the door, but by the time I got to the door they had gone on by. Well, as it happened, this policeman was in the car that was coming up behind them and this boy reported it to the other
Lynch: (Cont'd.) police department and they started down and they caught them right up the street here. Caught two boys and a girl in the car.

Silveri: Why were they doing it?

Lynch: I asked these boys... I said, "Why, why in the world did you do that?"

Said, "Well they didn't know; just something to do."

I think they got kind of tanked up on beer and just driving around with this girl. They released the girl, but they held the boys.

So the judge, when he had the trial, he asked these boys... stood them up with their mothers... said: "You boys been in any trouble before?"

They said, "No."

Of course their mothers said, "Oh, no, they're good boys and they've never been in any trouble before."

But the boy that served with the police department who worked up the case said, "I know one of these boys had been in a lot of trouble before because I've had him up for things."

Well, the judge didn't ask how many glass were broken out or what model car I had and how much trouble I'd have (just getting back to your question) getting parts. He didn't know how much trouble I'd have getting parts, the glass that were broken, but...
[TAPE I, SIDE II]

Lynch: (Cont'd.) . . . he said, "Now I'm going to let you boys off, if you've never been in trouble before, with twenty-five dollars apiece, in custody of your parents for a period of a year, and put the glass back in the doctor's car. Pay for that."

Well, he didn't ask how many glass were broken, or what it was going to cost, or anything.

Well, I finally did, after so long a time, got. . . .

didn't have much trouble getting the flat glass for the door. You could cut those, but the big glass in the back is molded, and so is the windshield. I've never been able to get the windshield yet. Still cracked windshield, but it's all right; I can drive it, it doesn't bother me. It's down near the bottom, but the cracks run off like this. You can see when you go out. So I've never gotten a windshield yet. But I did find a glass, but it lacked about this much being big enough at the top. But the boy that put it in said, "I can put this aluminum over (aluminum strip), and it will work all right." Which he did, and it's working all right.

Silveri: Have you ever been offered anything for the car?

Lynch: Well, I first thought I would sell it, and I put a sign on it. That was this last January. I decided I wasn't going to apply for a driver's license again. Well, the people, my friends, said, "Why you can drive. Why don't you go and apply?"

I said, "Well, I have some vision trouble, eye trouble,
Lynch: (Cont'd.) "and I don't know whether I can pass the examination or not."

In the meantime I had been a patient at Oteen Hospital, Veteran's Hospital, and they examined my eyes. Well, they didn't examine my eyes either, they examined my glasses and fitted a pair of glasses from my old glasses. Well, when I went to take the test, driver's test, the examiner turned me down on account of my vision.

I said, "Well now, George" (I knew him pretty well). I said, "George, my vision is due to my glasses." I said, "If it's all right with you, let me go to an eye man and have an examination, and maybe get new glasses and see what he says."

So I went to Dr. Roland and he examined my eyes. He gave me a very thorough examination and fitted me with these glasses.

He said, "There's no trouble why you can't drive; you can drive without any trouble, night or day."

I asked George to just let me drive during the day; not do any night driving, or not drive when there's bad rainy weather. Well, after Dr. Roland examined my eyes, I just took this back to George and told him what Dr. Roland had found, and he just gave me my license, without any trouble, for four years again. So I'm still driving my car. I took my sign down.

Silveri: I'm interested in the mountain people up here in the mountains around in Transylvania County and in the counties around here in the years in which you were practicing. Could you explain
Silveri: (Cont'd.) the character of the mountain people you came in contact with in your practice?

Lynch: Well, of course, after I came to Brevard I had it rough, too. I mean, my practice was bad because I made calls wherever I received the call, all over the county. At that time the Carr Lumber Company at Pisgah Forest was in operation, up in Pisgah National Forest. They had lumber camps built all over the forest, and the families would live there. That was also during the flu situation. Well, that was bad then, because I had calls to go to these camps, and sometimes the only way you could get there would be horseback, or walk. I left Pisgah Forest one afternoon about five o'clock on an engine, logging engine, with the engineer, fireman, and myself, and visited all the camps in Pisgah National Forest. Got back at five o'clock the next morning.

Silveri: Did you ever have to go away up in the mountains to an isolated mountain cabin?

Lynch: Yes. Oh, many times.

Silveri: Many times?

Lynch: Gunshot wounds; I fixed a boy's fingers... shot off... amputated two or three fingers. He let a gun go off in the palm of his hand. Did that by lamplight 'way back in the mountains. Another boy let a gun go off right under his arm. I had to fix him by lamplight back in the mountains. So it was just rough practice; that's the way it was. After so long a time, we began to get roads in Transylvania County, and I could use my car more. But back in these lumber camps,
Lynch: (Cont'd.) the only way you could get there would probably be horseback, and have to ford the river; no road, just a trail where you could ride a horse and cross the river by horseback.

Silveri: How far would you go from your office?

Lynch: Oh, I guess, back in the mountains, would be ten or fifteen miles.

Silveri: What were some of the names? Did you go... let's see, this is Transylvania County, the next county over is what?

Lynch: Well, the next county over is Jackson County, back this way, and Haywood County is just across the mountain: Canton, Sylva, Waynesville... And sometimes, back when I was doing health work, I'd visit all those counties: Jackson, Macon, and...

Silveri: Well, the County Health Officer was not the Coroner, was he?

Lynch: No.

Silveri: That was a separate...?

Lynch: I was Coroner.

Silveri: You were Coroner for a while?

Lynch: I was Coroner; elected on the Democratic ticket here in Brevard.

Silveri: So, how many years was that?

Lynch: I think I was Coroner for about one or two years, but I was elected on the ticket, I think, for a year.

Silveri: You could still keep your private practice doing that?
Lynch: Yes.

Silveri: What did the Coroner do?

Lynch: Well, for instance, a man was shot or died, and they had no doctor and didn't know what he died from or who shot him or how he was shot, the Coroner would have to go and examine the body. If it was necessary, he would impanel a jury of ten or twelve men to investigate, to see whether he shot himself or whether he was shot by someone, or so forth. If he died and didn't know what he died from, he would make the examination, and at times would have to do an autopsy.

One man I remember was struck by a train. I was surgeon for the Southern Railway for about ten years. This man was struck by an engine on the Transylvania Railroad, and I had to do an autopsy on him. Had a trial in Asheville... Southern Railway.

Silveri: Was someone found guilty of negligence in that case?

Lynch: Well, they found that it was his own...

Silveri: ... was his own fault?

Lynch: Yes; his own fault.

Silveri: You said you were surgeon for the railroad?

Lynch: For ten years; Southern Railway.

Silveri: Southern Railway? For ten years?

Lynch: That's a branch that came from Asheville, up this, to Lake Toxaway.

Silveri: So what were your duties on that?
Lynch: Well, anything. Just like that case there. I was a surgeon in that case, you see.

Silveri: Did you know Jesse James Bailey?

Lynch: Bailey?

Silveri: Bailey; he was a detective on the Southern Railway.

Lynch: No; I didn't know him.

Silveri: I'm very interested in any other rather unusual cases you had in the mountains.

Lynch: Well, I don't know of any, right off. During my practice here I was jail physician, Federal Jail Physician, County Physician, and so on and so forth.

Silveri: Did you ever get mixed up, unwillingly, with the moonshiners?

Lynch: No, not necessarily. We had, I had this one case: This man, I don't know what he had done, but he had barricaded himself in a house, a vacant house, and defied the law to come and get him. Well, at that time I was County Health Officer, and this officer came to me and asked me if I would go with him to see if he could arrest this man.

He said, "Now, I'm afraid to go. He said he's going to kill any officer that came near the house." He said, "Would you go along with me and see if you can talk to him as County Health Officer?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "I'll give you a gun in case you get into any trouble, and deputize you to use it." Which he did.
Lynch: (Cont'd.) So he stayed in the car, and I hollered and told this man that I was County Health Officer and I wanted to come see if I could help him out in any way.

So he said, "Come on in, Doc."

Just a mountain man, you know.

I went in and talked to him a little while and told him, "Now you're in trouble, and you're going to get in more trouble. I think the best thing you can do is let the officer come, that is down there in the car, and take you to town."

He said, "All right. All right."

So he did, and he took him in.

Silveri: Did you ever know Horace Kephart?

Lynch: Who?

Silveri: Horace Kephart.


Silveri: But you delivered many babies, didn't you?

Lynch: Oh, yeah, lots of them.

Silveri: Lots of them? You never kept track of it?

Lynch: Never kept track. I noticed there in this article, you know, I looked back and found I had forty-eight cases at one time.

Silveri: Forty-eight at one time?

Lynch: Yes, that is, I think you'll find it right here.

Silveri: You mentioned that in there. I wasn't quite sure what you meant by one time. There were forty-eight patients...
Lynch: Well, they were just booked. They weren't at one time, they were just on my book, where I would deliver them?

Silveri: In other words, there were forty-eight pregnant women under your care?

Lynch: Yes.

Silveri: What percent of your practice was that: maternity care?

Lynch: Well, of course, they had the hospital here, and the majority of those cases were hospital cases.

Silveri: I see. Oh, I see. You mentioned a midwife before. Were there a lot of midwives in this area?

Lynch: There were several. The County Health Nurse at that time had to interview these midwives and give them a lot... ask them a lot of questions and tell them what to do, you know, sanitation, and so on and so forth. So she kind of took charge of the midwives, but they've practically done away with midwives, now.

Silveri: Did those midwives have to be licensed in those days?

Lynch: Yes, yes.

Silveri: I see.

Lynch: This County Health Nurse, who was under my supervision at that time as County Health Officer, you see, the nurse and the sanitarian were under my supervision. And she would talk to those... have classes... and have the midwives come in, and instruct them as to what their duties would be.

Silveri: What about the problem of the payment of your fees?
Silveri: (Cont'd.) Did you have much trouble with people with that?  
Lynch: I had lots of trouble. That one I was telling you about, I didn't get any pay for that at all. And I think I mentioned in that little article there: lots of times I wouldn't get any pay except probably ham or chickens or provisions; corn and things of that type. People didn't have money they have now. This plant, which I just mentioned a little while ago, has been a big asset to this county, because now people make good money. Back then there were very few industries. The Silverstein company closed down and the Carr Lumber Company closed down, and people just didn't have employment; no way of making money.

Silveri: It must have been especially difficult during the depression years.

Lynch: Yes; yes.

Silveri: Very difficult for people to pay their... Well, did you find less people getting medical help?

Lynch: Well, I guess so, yes; and as I said, lots of them had to depend on midwives. They couldn't afford to have a doctor. For instance, that is, in their deliveries, baby deliveries.

Silveri: What did the county do back in those years for mentally retarded children and adults? Anything?

Lynch: They couldn't do too much.

Silveri: They stayed home with the family?

Lynch: Yes.
Silveri: Did you get much involved in politics when you were doctoring?

Lynch: Not too much. I was elected as Coroner on the Democratic ticket; that's about all. That's the only office I ever ran for, except through the Board of County Commissioners. I was elected for several years, about seven years, as county physician, which they called the County Physician at that time. I looked out for the inmates of the jail, and so forth.

Silveri: I see.

Lynch: At one time we had what they called the County Home, which was done away with. Poor folks who were not able to take care of themselves would go to this County Home. I had charge of that to see the inmates there when they were sick.

Silveri: You got a yearly fee for doing that from the County, right?

Lynch: Yes.

Silveri: Were you a life-long Democrat?

Lynch: Yes; my father was a Democrat, and the year he died he would have been Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners. He was nominated for the Board of County Commissioners, but he died before he served.

Silveri: That was in Buncombe County?

Lynch: That was in Buncombe County.

Silveri: Right. If you had to do it all over again would you
Silveri: (Cont'd.) have come...? Would you do the same thing: come down from Rosman and Brevard?
Lynch: I have thought lots of times, if I had my life to live over again I wouldn't probably be a doctor.
Silveri: Oh?
Lynch: I think I'd be a mechanical engineer.
Silveri: Oh.
Lynch: I've always had a knack of making things and doing things. Of course, that comes along with orthopedics.
Silveri: Yes.
Lynch: That's the reason I decided to do orthopedics: because I could make anything I wanted to with my hands that was makeable, so to speak. During orthopedics you've got to know how to make these braces. For instance, a child with a crippled leg: you've got to measure and make these braces, and so forth.

During the army, Orthopedic Division in the Army, I was assigned to the orthopedic [section] where they made all the braces and fitted the casts, and so forth. I did that for quite a little time while I was in the Army service.
Silveri: Before, I asked you to talk about the mountain character and I think you got side-tracked... the character of the mountain people that you came in contact with. What kind of people were they?
Lynch: They were just good mountain people; common mountain people. They would do anything in the world for you that they could.
Lynch: (Cont'd.) But they were not financially able to do for you like they can now, because they have employment now, and [are] making money, but back then they didn't have, and they were just back mountain people. They were good, substantial people, all of them, with the exception of a few.

Of course, there were some bootleggers, naturally, going on. . . find the stills every once in a while where they make the corn liquor. They'd get high on that every once in a while and have trouble, but otherwise, they were just good mountain people.

Silveri: Well, it's interesting what you say about wanting to be a mechanical engineer rather than a doctor. They have been rewarding years for you, however, haven't they?

Lynch: Oh, yes. I don't regret it at all, and I don't regret. . . While I couldn't follow up my orthopedics after I went back into practice here in Brevard. . . I left the orthopedic hospital there in Baltimore and came in private practice. . . I couldn't follow the orthopedics because there wasn't enough here to do that, so I went just into general practice.

Silveri: Your older brother continued to practice. Where? In Asheville?

Lynch: He practiced in Baltimore for a time, and he was associated with Dr. Trimble, who was surgeon for the Baltimore Transit Company in Baltimore. He practiced with Dr. Trimble for a number of years and his health went to the bad and he came home and stayed for
Lynch: (Cont'd.) two years, and then was in practice in Asheville, and was a very good surgeon in Asheville.

He delivered and operated on Cornelia Vanderbilt. He was a Vanderbilt doctor, and delivered the boys who now have charge of the Vanderbilt Estate. He operated on Cornelia Vanderbilt (that was their daughter) and he had a very good practice, very fine practice as a surgeon in Asheville.

Silveri: I want to ask you about whether there were many black people in this area? Did you treat any black people over the years?

Lynch: I never had too much of that; I never had much black practice.

Silveri: There were very few of them living in this area.

Lynch: There weren't too many; no, not too many. I guess Dr. Stokes really did most of the colored practice in Brevard. Occasionally, I did, but I don't know whether I ever delivered a colored baby or not; I don't remember it. Not that I wouldn't have, but it seems like they just didn't come to me. I don't know why. I guess they kind of felt like I wouldn't do it. I don't know. But I would have, if it was necessary.

Silveri: Thank you very much for your time.

Lynch: Well, you're welcome.