

Rag Popping Shoe Shine Boy Still Going Strong at Age 86

Chattanooga's famed shoe shine boy, immortalized in song, is strictly commonplace compared with Foscue Mitchell, who wields the rag at one of New Bern's downtown barber shops.

Spry as a cricket, and a philosopher worth listening to, this 86-year-old Negro not only holds down a full-time job but does extra work for several stores.

"I was a railroad fireman for 40 years," says the dapper octogenarian, "starting with those old wood burners on the Atlantic and North Carolina railroad."

His run from Morehead City to Goldsboro used to be an all-day affair. In fact, sometimes the train left Morehead at 7 in the morning and didn't arrive at its destination until far into the night.

He fondly remembers that Mr. Jim Bryan was the president of the railroad and Mr. Joe Green, he says, was the master mechanic. Firing that locomotive was no easy task, but Foscue loved it and hated to be retired.

"I felt like a throwed-out mule," he told us. The elderly Negro didn't stay throwed-out long. Grabbing

himself a shoe shine box, he embarked on a new undertaking and earned a living for his wife and children.

"A man won't get in trouble when he stays busy," Foscue reasons, as that's as much a part of his religion as the Bible he likes to quote from.

In his case, he has not only stayed out of trouble, but stayed young doing it.

New Highway Map Boosts New Bern

Our town gets its share of good publicity from the latest official highway map of the North Carolina State Highway Commission.

Among the color illustrations on the reverse side of the map is a view at the entrance to the Tryon Palace grounds. Among the other illustrations are scenes of Old Salem, Orton Plantation, Ocracoke, Lake Lure, the Blue Ridge Parkway, Grandfather Mountain, Clingman's Dome and the Charlotte Coliseum.

New Bern is one of eight cities listed beneath the map, with approximate driving times to leading cities in the nation indicated. In addition to New Bern, the towns thus listed are Asheville, Charlotte, Elizabeth City, Fayetteville, Raleigh, Wilmington and Winston-Salem.

More Conventions Should Be Coming

New Bern, with its improved hotel facilities and available auditoriums, should attract still more conventions in the future.

Asheville, the State's leading convention city, has demonstrated what can be done when a community makes up its mind to land the big and little meetings that bob up annually.

Last year alone, it played host to 80 conventions, and brought 31,830 delegates to the mountain metropolises. Those thousands of delegates left many an outside dollar when they headed home.

New Bern has no lofty peaks to

exploit, but with unexcelled history we should do all right if we put and ever-broadening water sports, forth the effort.

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