



# The NEW BERN MIRROR

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-If Uncle Sam's Postmaster General ever runs out of folks to put on his postage stamps, he can always fall back on Trotting Jim.

No other man in the history of the nation's mail service compares with this amazing ex-slave, who liked to impersonate a horse while footing hundreds of miles a week.

Fair weather or foul, he covered his difficult coastal route on schedule. It was Jim's job to get the mail pouches to Swansboro and back, thence to Beaufort, and back by way of Harlowe to his starting point at Newport.

It was a superhuman assignment, but Trotting Jim was a superhuman. He got his job in the first place because horse-drawn vehicles were unable to overcome such obstacles as high tides and washed out bridges.

Since this 35 year old Negro had proven himself capable of running 50-mile errands, he was a logical choice to tackle the problem at hand. For 20 years the six-foot, 170-pound marvel proved faithful to the finest traditions of the mail service, and quit only when improved rail connections made his marathon jaunts unnecessary.

More than a half century has passed, but to this day he remains the most legendary figure in the history of the coast country. After giving up his mail toting, the human horse continued to serve hardy, weather beaten residents in Newport area.

When a doctor was needed, you could count on Jim to get word to him. He would help the sleepy-eyed physician hitch up his buggy, but politely refused to ride back with him to the scene of distress.

"Don't fret about me," the old colored man would say, "I'll get there all right." And he always did.

Trotting Jim's real name was Louis Wiggins. His son, Louis Jr., lived in New Bern for years, serving as a guide for hunters. The last time we saw him he was nigh onto 70, but could still do acrobatics.

More unbelievable than Trotting Jim's remarkable durability was his yen to play horse. Armed with a stout switch, he would beat himself on the shanks whenever he was ready to take off down the road.

During his long service as a transporter of mail, Jim usually strapped the pouch to his back. However, he had a cart to use when the mail was particularly heavy.

With deadly seriousness he would hitch himself to the traces, and take the bridle in his mouth. Then with a cluck and a tap of the switch, he started on his appointed rounds.

As fas as this lithe, cat-like Negro was concerned, shoes were an evil designed primarily for church going. He always wore his to services at the Jones Chapel Methodist church, but didn't care to be handicapped with them when he was at work.

He was never known to drink, smoke or indulge in other forms of dissipation. Though it wasn't deliberate on his part, he kept perfect training, and was a past master at the track art of pacing. Nobody knew better than Trotting Jim that it was possible for an athlete to get his "second wind" just before reaching exhaustion.

He died at 75, not from old age but a skin infection reportedly contracted when he exhumed the body of a child for its parents. Such was the strange ending to the amazing story of Trotting Jim.

## Young Democrats Plan to Organize

Interest is high here in the planned organization Tuesday night of a New Bern Young Democrat club.



FOR EVERY AGE—This Sunday morning scene at Broad Street Christian Church is typical of New Bern's other places of worship, too. Religion is for the young and the old alike, and families that pray together stay together.

These New Bernians, leaving the sanctuary, have heard the Word of God, and are the better for it.—Photo by John R. Baxter.

—HERE IN NEW BERN—

## Outer Space Ain't for Kids

New Bern's first graders have embarked upon education's avenue in an amazing era of atoms, but things nuclear are of little concern to them.

Despite a changing world, childhood remains delightfully changeless, and local small fry are as much like kids of the past as the proverbial peas in a pod.

Such is revealed in a survey by The Mirror, aimed at representative six-year-olds. It's astounding how closely the answers we got coincide with similar answers that their parents gave us in a survey we made for the Raleigh News and Observer a quarter of a century or more ago.

Then as now, there are more young ladies in the first grade who want to be nurses than any other professions. Teaching is a very close second, and that too is an exact duplicate of sentiments voiced by the little girls of long ago.

One of the diminutive members of the fair sex has a rather intriguing choice. She insisted that she wants to be Annie Oakley when

she grows up. Not like Annie Oakley, mind you, but Annie Oakley in the flesh.

How she plans to arrange this reincarnation, transformation, or what have you, isn't clear. Afraid to become too deeply involved, we evaded detailed discussion of this point.

Strange as it may seem, none of the boys wanted to pilot a rocket excursion to the moon. Just like their dads at the same age, they have a yen to be a fireman, a doctor, a cowboy, a sailor, or a railroad engineer.

Their fascination for pistols, al-

most as old as boyhood itself, is reflected in the fact that cops and cowboys finish in a dead heat as the most popular occupations of the masculine small fry.

Maybe the survey proves nothing at all. If so, it won't be the first survey that was inconclusive. However, we've got a sneaking suspicion that there's more behind it than meets the eye.

It might well be that today's kids, in their remarkable allegiance to the things that oldsters found appealing in the past, are pointing up the futility of our troubled times.

Adult anxiety hasn't seeped down to their level yet, except the usual anxiety and exasperation that conscientious parents feel in rearing their brood.

If modern youngsters find joy in the relics of our own lost childhood, it is just possible that we discarded the wrong things in our quest for permanent or temporary peace of mind.

We may laugh at the faith of a child in accepting quite literally their fairyland of fantasy. But what is more fantastic than grown-ups trying to reach and dominate other worlds in outer space before they learn how to run the one little world they're inhabiting.

That's why we envy the little boy at Central Elementary who intends to be the Lone Ranger, and his classmate who aims to be Davy Crockett, bye and bye. To us that sounds much better than being a rocket rider commuting to and from Mars.

After all, the worst you had to expect from an Indian was a scalping. Nowadays, you've not only got to worry about bombs and guided missiles, but such disconcerting things as purple people eaters.

We can hardly wait until our second childhood, so we can enter the first grade all over again.

## Mary Emma Hurst Happily Married to Famous Artist

When New Bern's Mary Emma Hurst married Leo Hershfield, the nationally-famous artist and illustrator, more than 20 years ago she stepped out of the limelight herself, and has never regretted it.

At the time the two met in New York's Greenwich Village, back in the early 30's, she was an interior decorator at Macy's, had been successful as a photographer's model and had done some ballet dancing professionally.

Earlier, at Marjorie Webster school in the nation's capital, she set an AAU women's freestyle swimming record for the Washington area, and still holds it.

Today, at the Hershfield's new home in Bradenton, Fla., she is happy to be a good housewife and the mother of two fine sons, 18-year-old Peter, who is studying electrical engineering at the University of Virginia, and 13-year-old Samuel.

The family formerly lived in

Alexandria, Va., in the historic 1790 home of Admiral and Mrs. John Paul Barker Barrett. They moved to Florida because the climate there was more beneficial to Mary Emma's health.

While in Alexandria she spent 24 hours weekly as a Red Cross nurse's aide at the hospital there, and a full day each week in the Community Health clinic.

She started her volunteer nursing in New York during the war years. At Alexandria she was named chairman of the nurses aides in 1955, and was a board member of the Alexandria Red Cross chapter at the time she moved to Bradenton.

Leo, a native of Knoxville, Tenn., is perhaps best known for his cartoons in the Saturday Evening Post, but as far back as the 20's he was sketching such celebrities as Lionel Barrymore, Lillian Gish, W. C. Fields, Will Rogers and Ray Dooley.

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## Everything Ready For A.A.'s Banquet

Everything is in readiness for tomorrow night's anniversary banquet of the New Bern and Craven Alcoholics Anonymous groups.

Scheduled for the ballroom of the Hotel Governor Tryon, it will have as featured speaker Dennis McGenty, executive director of the New York City Alcoholism Information Center.

The dinner meeting is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. in the Ambassador room of the Hotel Governor Tryon, and reservations may be made by contacting the temporary chairman, James O. Simpkins.

## Fifty-One Cases on Calendar of Court

Fifty-one cases are listed on the calendar for trial during the two-week civil term of Craven Superior court that opens here on Monday, September 29.

Judge Clifton L. Moore of Burgaw will be the presiding jurist. A total of 42 jurors have been called for each of the two weeks. Included are 11 members of the fair sex.