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William Churchill Gibson Boyd, whose life span has been as lengthy as his name, stole the show the other night when New Bern Steam Fire Engine Co. No. 1 held its annual dinner at the Maola opera house.

A dapper youngster of 92, who is yet to develop a middle-age paunch, Boyd is the oldest living member of the organization, which incidentally is far better known as "Button Company."

It was Ladies Night, and this grand old man of an all-but-forgotten era flashed his Southern courtliness to the utmost. It is easy to see why feminine hearts used to flutter, before the turn of the century, when he came into close proximity.

Called upon to speak at the aforementioned dinner, Boyd gave a witty recounting of the fire fighting he participated in as far back as 75 years ago. He knew what it was, as a teen-ager, to pull a hand reel to the scene of some blaze at the other end of town. And he knows how to tell about it, too.

"These early members of the Button company displayed unbelievable loyalty," he told fellow firemen, their wives and guests. "We had nothing but shallow wells in town, and our fire fighting equipment was exceedingly limited. But, when the call for help came, the local volunteer fire department never failed to give its best for the community."

You could have heard a pin drop in the opera house, as Boyd wistfully escorted his listeners along Memory Lane. He spoke with understandable affection of the old fire horses, and how quickly they pulled steamers and hose wagons from the fire station.

"I remember how John Wright, the driver, would pull the string that released their drop harness," he mused, like a man talking softly to himself. "Our station was next to the present County jail," he said, "where Rodman Guion had his office for many years."

There was no fire alarm system in New Bern, when Boyd began his career as a smoke-eater. "Somebody would yell at the scene of the fire, and other citizens would relay the call from block to block until it reached the fire station."

With a twinkle in his eye, the Button company's oldest member told how in his younger days he not only sported a moustache, as he does now, but a VanDyke beard.

"Once," he said, "while talking to Louis Howard's father in front of their clothing store, a stranger with Mr. Howard whispered something in his ear."

Mr. Howard laughed heartily, and then introduced the stranger as his brother, "He asked me which rabbi you are," Howard informed Boyd, who then as now was a staunch Episcopalian. In fact, he is "Honorary Warden for Life" of St. James Episcopal church at Black Mountain.

On another occasion, Boyd related, he was mistaken for a preacher. When he informed the inquisitive party that he wasn't, the man shook his head. "You would have made a helluva one," he said.

Mrs. Mamie Hall, beloved widow of Charles H. Hall, Sr., was a guest at the delightful Ladies Night affair, and impulsively stood up for a bit of reminiscing herself, when Boyd took his seat.

"I remember going to Mr. Boyd's office with my father, when I was a little girl," she recalled, "and he was always very kind and polite. I remember the thrill of seeing those fire horses too."

Then she mentioned the terrifying occasion when she saw one of the fire engines turn over, while rounding a corner too sharply. The engine went one way, the horses another, and John Wright another,"



MAKE WAY FOR DOBBIN—We have been running photos of dogs, cats, calves, alligators and woodpeckers, so it's high time we displayed an honest-to-goodness horse, ambling along Pollock street in the heart of New Bern's busi-

ness section. Historic Christ Episcopal church is in the background, as Bill Benners snaps his camera. Speaking of things historic, that carriage, its driver, and even Dobbin, are all relics of the long lost past.

U. S. Week to Honor Horses Finds Our Hay Burners Gone

Having a National Save The Horse Week to honor nags and mules is a wonderful idea, but New Bern's horse population will never hear about it.

The trusted steeds won't know about it, because they've been dead these many years. Paying compliments to a deceased horse, or a mule that stopped kicking long ago, is as futile as bailing out the ocean with a thimble. You just don't get anywhere, no matter how hard you try.

Maybe it's different out in Colorado, where the Denver Post started this whole idea. And of course it's different on television, where horses gallop across the screen in much the same ratio that ants and flies show up at a Sunday school picnic in mid-August.

It wasn't waning popularity, but the march of modern gadgets that consigned New Bern's forlorn fugitives from a glue factory to oblivion. There was nothing but obli-

vision remaining, when the horsepower in gasoline engines and the watts in electric voltage replaced bit, harness and reins.

First casualty was the horse who pulled a local trash wagon, and doubled as a fire horse. The fire truck and garbage truck put him out of commission, even as tractors eliminated most horses and mules on Craven county farms.

Then, of course, the good old horse that used to haul dray into your backyard, with a load of dry kiln or slabs, met his doom too. Those modern gas and electric stoves, replacing the wood range that your Ma cooked wonderful vittles on sentenced him to certain extinction.

You need not be told what happened to the horse that pulled the ice wagon. You got to know him real well as a kid, when you hopped on the back step of this enchanted conveyance, and scooped up chips of frozen pleasure while the ice man was delivering a 50-

pound lump to Mrs. Jones on the second floor.

The ice-wagon horse was a nice horse. Much nicer, as we recall, than the spirited critter at the front of the milk wagon. He would tap a nip at you, if you tried to pat him, and the horse that provided momentum for the bread wagon was just about as ornery.

But the ice-wagon horse was gentle, or maybe he was perpetually tired. Anyhow, he obeyed the ice man's commands with unflinching precision. The ice man called to him from the sidewalk, or porches, and his horse would take a few steps along the oyster-shelled street until he was right smack in front of the house where the next customer lived.

The most patient horse of all, however, was the trash horse that tumbled into a hole up to his neck, when Metcalf street caved in near the corner of Pollock.

It he was the least bit surprised, he didn't show it, and he waited

with astounding dignity while employees of the city labored to extricate him from his unexpected predicament.

Then there was the momentous morning when a run-away mule from James City headed straight for Mitchell's hardware store, and dropped dead the moment he entered the store. It actually happened.

Friends of the popular proprietor, Tom Mitchell, joshed him to a fare-thee-well about the matter. One wag insisted that the mule keeled over when he found out how much Tom wanted for a set of horse shoes.

All in all, New Bern's horses were good citizens. They never got drunk, snatched nickels out of the collection plate on Sunday morning, or lived beyond their means.

It's fitting indeed that they're being appreciated, along with America's other horses and mules. But why did it have to happen too late?

Our Town Has Top Authority On Real Dixieland Melodies

Don't head for New Orleans or Memphis, if you're looking for a nationally recognized expert on Dixieland jazz.

Right here in New Bern you'll find one of the best, Don 'Pops' Campbell, who has been described as a crusader so humble, so selfless in his work that he is almost apologetic for the honors stacked knee-deep around him.

Superintendent and Greens-Keeper for the Cherry Point Golf Course, he doesn't play golf, but can do things with a set of drums that is a joy to fellow musicians.

Don got his training from the truly great of his day, and at the age of seven was taking formal

she recalled.

It was a Ladies Night to remember, and these old-timers made it so.

lessons from Billy Dunningham, the old-time vaudeville star.

Following basic study with Dunningham, he went under the tutelage of Simon Steinberg of the Boston Symphony orchestra, and eventually studied tympani under the celebrated Lawrence Stone.

It is a matter of record that Campbell has performed with the Boston Pops, the Pittsburgh Symphony and the National Symphony. He is prouder, we suspect, to merit the distinction of having played with Phil Napoleon's Original Memphis Five.

Among other noteworthy things is the fact that he made recordings with famed Red Nichols and his Five Pennies. And Don will never forget the time at The Flamingo, a hot spot 10 miles out of Providence, when he took part in an all-night jam session with the one



and only "Fats" Waller.

Speaking of Providence, he played in the Providence Symphony

under the baton of the great Belgian conductor, Wasali Leps. All (Continued on back page)