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New Bern youngsters of this modern era show little concern for geographical boundaries within the town, but it wasn't always that way.

As recently as a generation ago, a kid was decidedly conscious of the section he hailed from, and quite proud to be a part of it. Any boy who strayed out of his own locale was apt to get a thrashing, especially if he ventured forth with a chip on his shoulder.

Riverside was a good (or bad) example of this not-so-friendly feuding among teen agers residing here. Then, as now, the area was referred to as Little Russia at times, but the Riverside lads themselves were prouder to be called "Dunn fielders".

Boys elsewhere in town did a pretty good job of stirring up all sorts of mischief, but for originality and exuberance they just could not measure up with the doing concocted in and around Dunn's field.

Even to the last, when the original Dunn field crowd had grown up, there was plenty of excitement carried on by their worthy successors, including, among others, Harry Brock, Alford Seloff, Edward Legallais, Louie and Jack Lee, the Baxter brothers, Grimsley brothers, Strickland brothers, the Smith brothers, the Parker brothers, Bill Harris and Reid Fuller.

Tired of mayhem on the ground they rigged up a cable, high in the tree tops, and strung it through a half inch piece of pipe. The idea was to grab the pipe and slide down the cable with your body suspended precariously in mid-air.

It was risky business, but nobody was sissy enough to pass up the trip. Fortunately and quite miraculously, most of the boys negotiated the dangerous trip without disaster. One of them, Red Smith, took one ride too many, however.

Red lost his grasp on the pipe, fell to the ground and was knocked colder than a chicken that has been in deep freeze for months. He stayed knocked out, too, so his comrades loaded him on a wheelbarrow, and carted him to his home on Avenue A.

No one was home, so they toted him upstairs and put him to bed. Next morning Red wasn't able to get up, but he kept mum about what had happened. Squealing would only have gotten Red and the other boys in trouble. Besides, he didn't want that cable torn down before he could get back in shape for some more joyous riding.

Down on South Front street, the boys thereabout were just about as hectic, and far better business men. Meadows Fertilizer company, pestered by rats, offered to pay the youngsters for every rat killed on the firm's property.

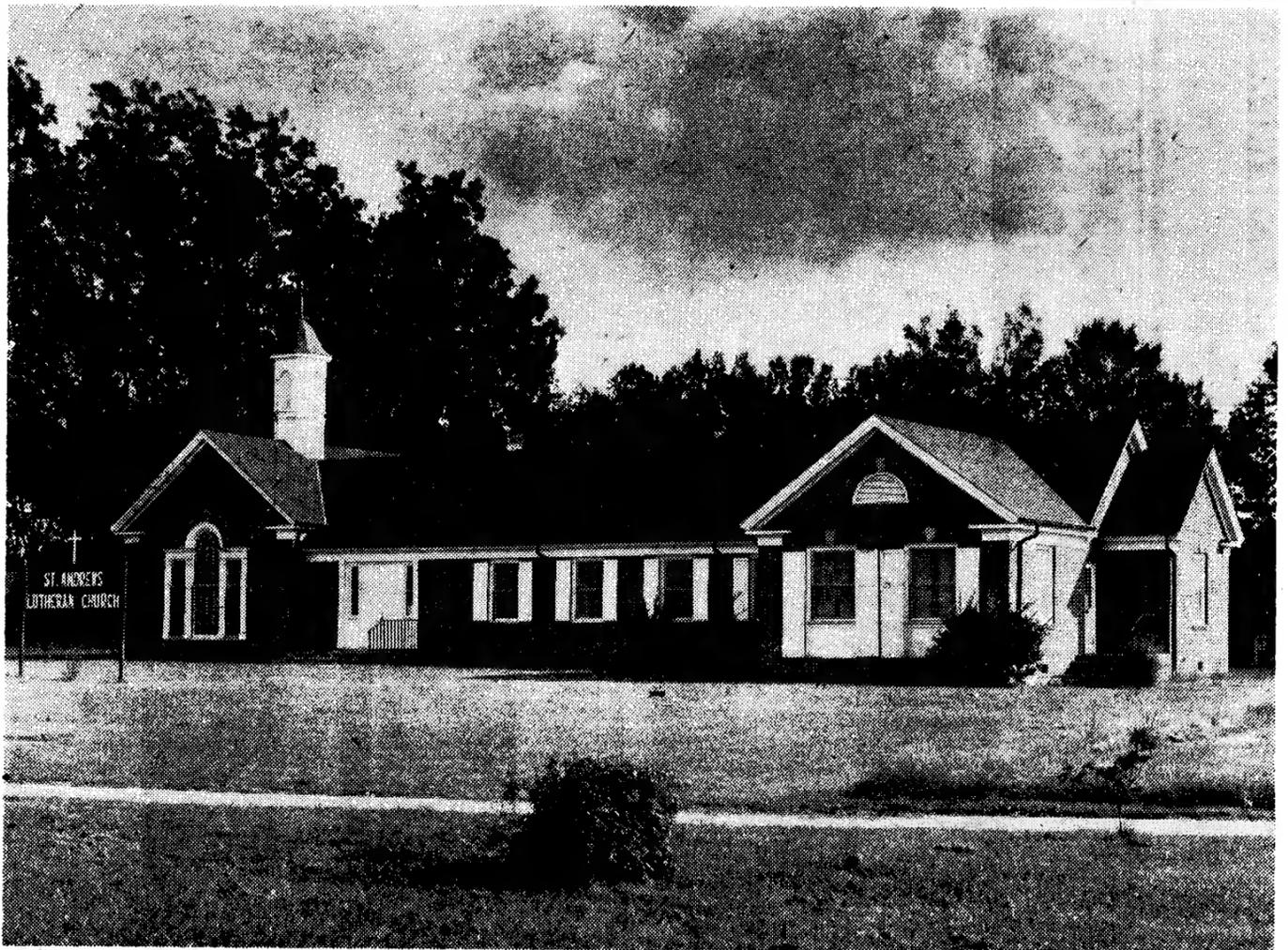
Not content with collecting a tidy sum for their wholesale assassination of the rodents, some of the gang did a bit of sleuthing and discovered where the purchased rats were being disposed of.

It was almost as good as discovering a gold mine. From that point on, each rat was sold repeatedly until he was no longer suitable merchandise. In cold weather it was surprising how durable a rat could be. Even in summer he did rather well.

Back in those days, the Meadows company had a night watchman who was deaf as a post. Each hour as he made his rounds, he would ring the mill bell, and you could hear it for blocks and blocks.

Timing him to perfection, the boys would peal out the hour a minute before he got to the bell, and he would come right behind them and do likewise. That was life in New Bern, before the days of juvenile delinquency.

Having a way of your own helps you keep out of the way of others.



NEED NOT BE OLD—New Bern's appeal is greatly enhanced by the stately splendor of its historic places of worship. New churches, properly designed and in the right

setting are lovely to look at too. St. Andrews Lutheran church is an impressive example.—Photo by Billy Benners.

Christmas Shoppers Actually Enjoy the Crowded Rushing

Listen to the average New Bernian complain, along about this time of year, and you'd almost swear that shopping for Christmas is as miserable an experience as washing your feet with your socks on.

Don't you believe it. Despite the hustle and the bustle, and the mad scramble to get everybody remembered, it's as much a part of the Yuletide as trimming the tree, and few of us would have it any other way.

Like some folks who enjoy ill health, because it gives them a

chance to give hapless friends a daily medical report on their ailments and symptoms, we get a kick out of the suffering.

If it really was as painful, as we make ourselves believe, we would do something about it earlier. Christmas cards would be addressed in July, and presents would be purchased or either laid away weeks or months in advance.

A few of us get an early start, but you've probably noticed that these early birds seem to enjoy the holidays a little less than ordi-

nary mortals who aren't quite so methodical and punctual.

Honest injun, what could be more depressing than folding your hands and waiting for Christmas to finally get here. The suspense would be worse than having your feet stepped on at crowded counters, or waiting in line to purchase stamps and mail your packages.

To begin with, everybody wants to be in close proximity to everybody else during the Christmas season, and the place to achieve this is in jammed stores and along congested streets. Don't seek isolation and idleness, you'll be like a fish out of water, and end up barging into the mob just for the heck of it.

Supposing, for example, you did-

n't see a soul on the hottest day in the year. Hot weather's only compensation is the privilege of saying, "Ain't it hot?" to as many other perspiring persons as possible.

Christmas shopping is awful—awfully exciting and awfully interesting. Make the most of it.

MARRIAGE LICENSES ISSUED

Thomas Hays of Newport to Greta Lou Rice of Morehead City.

Charles Holloway of New Bern to Mary Mills of New Bern.

Stephen Cashwell Hall to Lydia Gail Daw of New Bern.

Miss Mollie Was Christmas At Its Best All Year Through

Anyone who ever had Miss Mollie Heath as a first grade teacher will agree that this grand little lady embodied the true spirit of Christmas.

Gentle and young at heart, she was as spritely as one of Santa's prankish helpers. To the countless children who passed through her classroom, she was the most wonderful somebody this side of Heaven. They haven't forgotten her either, or changed their minds, in the years since she went to meet her Maker.

That's why the lights on her Christmas tree, at the corner of Middle and Pollock, shine with a brightness surpassing all the other lights in New Bern's business section.

A living memorial, such as this on the grounds of Christ Episcopal church, is particularly appropriate for Miss Mollie. The qualities that

made her beloved by many generations of the town's small fry are as permanently alive and ageless as Springtime.

Once, as school ended for the day, we stopped her in front of the Primary Building at Central Elementary, and asked her to pose for a snapshot. Flattered, as she always was by even the smallest kindness, she obliged.

It was also prophetic that she chose to stand by a tree. Miss Mollie loved trees, and birds and flowers, but more than anything or anybody else she loved children. She had utmost faith in every kid that crossed her path. "There aren't any really bad ones," she told us.

So, if you're a child, or a child grown up, pause before Miss Mollie's Christmas tree, and bless her memory. She was what Christmas is, or should be.

