



# The NEW BERN MIRROR

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Miles Lee, for the first time in 26 years, won't be on hand when the Riverside Elementary school resumes classes this year.

However, the retired Negro janitor is by no means forgotten. Every child there will feel a little sad. To them, he was perfection personified, and to tell the truth you'd have to search rather diligently to find a serious flaw in his make-up.

Permanently handicapped as the result of a hip fracture years ago, he wasn't one to dodge work. It is doubtful that any employee in the history of New Bern's public schools has been as dependable and as anxious to render service beyond the call of duty.

Although he lives across Trent river, in James City, he could be counted on to report for work ahead of time in fair weather or foul. In fact, on particularly cold mornings he bailed out of bed as early as three o'clock to make sure that there would be sufficient heat when his beloved bevy of juvenile friends arrived.

His great love for the white children who attend the Riverside school has been an inspiring thing. As for the kids, their deep affection for Miles bordered on hero worship. For that matter, the teachers at Riverside will readily tell you that the faithful janitor was deserving of the love that the pupils accorded him.

When it was announced at the school that he was retiring, it was a foregone conclusion that the youngsters would want to stage a Miles Lee Day. Encouraged by grateful and approving parents, they almost smothered him with an outpouring of gifts that included groceries, clothes and money.

It was a sight to behold, and by far the biggest event of the school year. From it, if they didn't already know, the boys and girls learned the marvelous lesson of bringing happiness to yourself by giving to someone else.

Lee stayed busy at his chores during his more than a quarter of a century in the public school system. However, in his few spare moments on the job he watched over the children like a hen guarding her biddies.

With the kindly Negro around, the kids felt a measure of extra security. And in their moments of trouble, they turned to him for comfort and counsel. It was a touching relationship that never faltered through the years.

We particularly like one story told us by Howard Barnes, superintendent of maintenance for the City schools. One day he and Miles were riding through Riverside enroute to another school, after the classes had been turned out.

They were passing a residence where several kids were rather overdoing their exuberance in a porch swing. The swing broke, and through the air they sailed, out into the yard.

They took quite a tumble, and were badly shaken up. Before they had a chance to whimper over their assorted hurts, Miles was out of the truck and by their side.

Bruised though they were, and rather dazed, they recognized him instantly. They grinned in unison, and just as unanimously yelled, "Hey, Miles!" There wasn't any need to cry, with Miles around. His very presence made the mishap seem minor.

Staying away from the Riverside school is going to be a trying experience for Lee. It's as close to his heart as the church he attends, and sooner or later he'll go limping back for a visit. To do less would probably put him in a grave well ahead of his time.

The kids will be quick to spy him, and come rushing with shouts of jubilation. Ask any boy or girl

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LAUGH, CLOWN, LAUGH—There's nothing put on about Jim Moore's pleasure as he discovers a pretty girl to talk to while advertising a local movie—"The Big Circus." This delightful scene was snapped on Middle street the other

day. The charming but slightly startled miss is Sara Caraway, 16, a rising Junior at New Bern High school.—Photo by Billy Benners.

## Jeannine Gets Our Ballot for City's First Grader of the Year

School hasn't taken in yet, but our nomination for New Bern's first grader of the year will most certainly be Jeannine Langston, who celebrated her sixth birthday on June 3rd.

Picking her ahead of time is peculiarly appropriate, seeing as how the vivacious young blonde has a habit of jumping the gun herself. In fact, she insisted on being born 15 weeks ahead of schedule.

This didn't present much of a problem for the Stork. After all, hauling a heavenly bundle that weighed just two pound, three ounces upon arrival at Kafer Memorial hospital could hardly be termed back-breaking.

For quite a spell it appeared that the little lady had been too eager for her own good. Dr. Ernest Richardson ushered her into the world, when she insisted on it, and then Dr. Graham A. Barden, Jr., took over.

Jeannine probably expected to have her premature fling in the wide open spaces, but she had another think coming. Instead of whooping it up in unconfined ecstasy, she was consigned to an incubator and remained there for three exasperating months.

Babies born too soon usually sleep constantly. They have to be awakened for feeding, and then return to their incessant slumbering. Not so with the Langston tot. When she got hungry, which was often, she woke up. In fact, the only thing big about her was her appetite, and her tremendous determination to fool everybody and live.

Jeannine wasn't by herself when it came to feeling exasperated. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Milton Langston, Jr., had the unhappy experience of waiting month after month

for their first opportunity to even touch, much less cuddle their child.

And in the end a humorous situation developed. Mrs. Langston (Peggy) had appendicitis just be-

fore the baby was due to come home. She underwent surgery at Kafer Memorial, and when she was dismissed from the hospital, Jeannine came home with her. "I got kidded a lot," says Peggy, "about going to the hospital for an appendectomy and coming back with an infant daughter."

You need not be told that a case like Jeannine's is rare in medical annals. Not only is her survival a tribute to her own will to live and do well but an indication of the excellent care she received from Dr. Barden and the nurses who fairly worshipped her.

She weighed all of five pounds when she was three months old. At that time it was considered advisable to give her blood transfusions. However, she had O negative blood, a type that isn't very common among mortals.

A call for volunteer donors went out to the Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station. Three lady marines immediately responded, and Jeannine got a deserved boost from the gift that flowed into her veins.

You would never know today that the youngster had two strikes against her at birth. She has been exceptionally healthy, and tips the scales at an impressive 50 pounds.

As for her appetite, it's still well nigh astounding. "Our only problem is filling her up," says Peggy. "Last week we went down to Morehead City for a seafood dinner, and ordered a 75-cent plate for her. Before it was over, she had eaten two re-fills."

Most little girls love dolls, but Jeannine always had a craze for

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JEANNINE LANGSTON