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If you're past 50 or pushing it, and have a fairly good memory, you may recall a time during the depression when the Golden West bloomed in Dixie. As a matter of fact, it blossomed briefly right here in Craven, Jones and Pamlico counties.

Fantastic though it sounds even to this day, the Federal government decided it would be a good idea to bring something like a hundred thousand cattle into North Carolina from drought areas on the far side of the Mississippi.

And, with stupidity that defies the imagination, somebody connected with the ERA selected the boggy pocosin in our coastal area as a dumping ground for 22,000 of these miserable moo-moos.

According to officials in the ERA office in Raleigh, a representative came down here to investigate the possibilities when the project was contemplated. Just how much actual investigating was done must be left to conjecture. Like a lot of so-called experts, it is obvious that this gentleman wasn't much of an authority on the subject he was handling.

It can be said with certainty that he didn't know what it would take to keep a starving steer alive. Anyhow, the bewildered cattle arrived, and an assortment of aspiring cowboys in the three counties got jobs to play nurse maid.

The amateur cowpokes were considerably happier that the cattle they were hired to protect. Some of them eagerly procured attire to suit the occasion, and developed a swagger that would have done credit to Tom Mix or Roy Rogers.

As should have been expected, the thing didn't work out. In due time a goodly number of the steers found themselves floundering aimlessly in an area that was approximately 18 miles by 47 miles in its entirety. They defied the concerted efforts of searching crews employed to drive them out into the open.

It was quickly established that at least 12 per cent of the doomed critters had died. The sordid suspicion that, in fact, a majority of the missing were likewise dead evolved into grim reality.

Up in Raleigh, the ERA folks were determined to get the cattle out at any price. When it was possible to do so, they were to be brought out alive. Where saving them appeared impractical, the searchers had orders to shoot them down in their tracks.

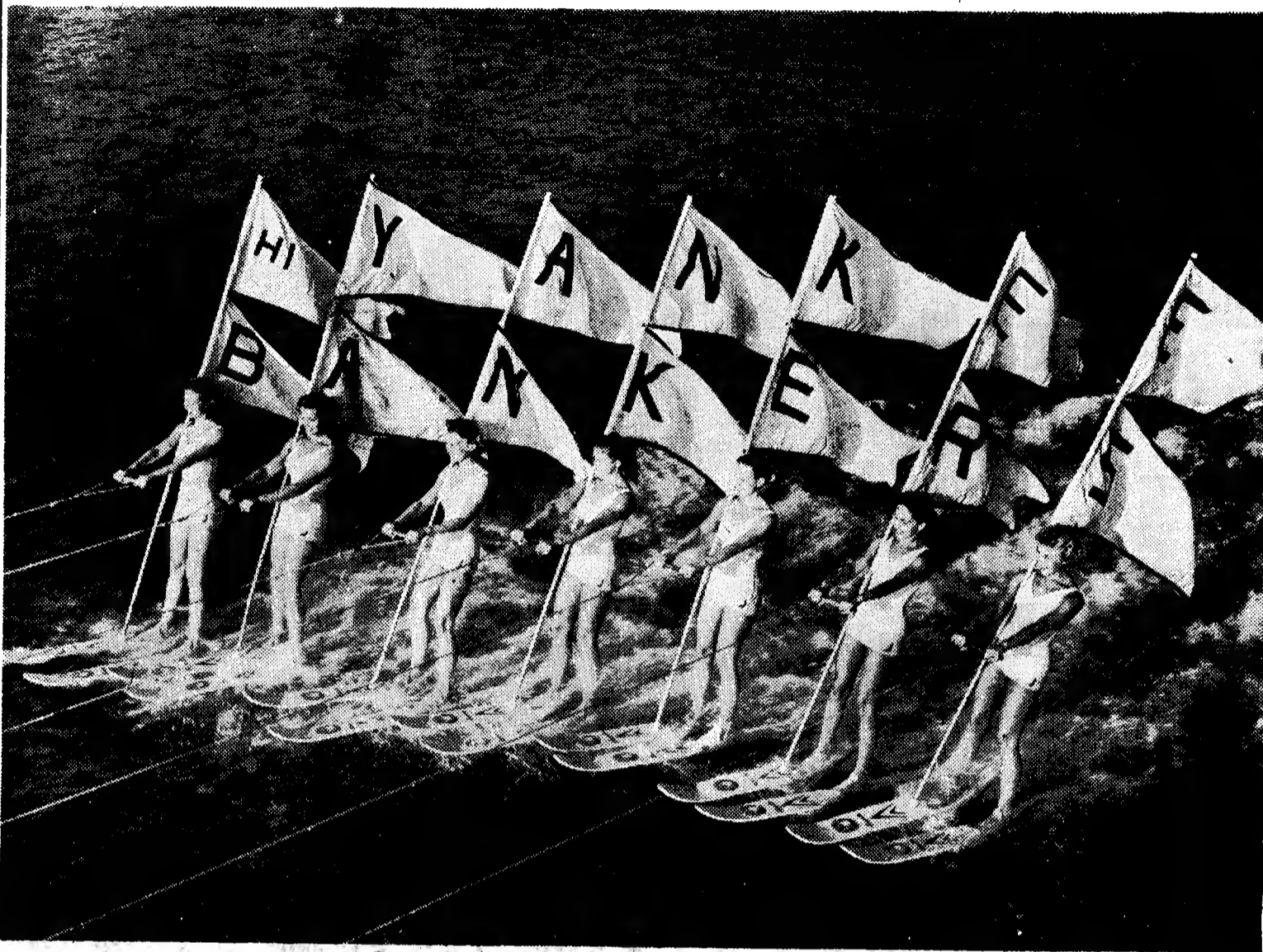
Civilians were offered a dollar a head for every steer they could rescue, and even fifty cents a head to discover their approximate whereabouts. To the best of our knowledge, nobody was able to fatten their purse on the proposition.

Some idea of the expense involved in the venture can be gathered from the fact that approximately \$100,000 in labor and equipment had to be paid for before the cattle that managed to live even reached the slaughter house.

Since a complete abattoir and a modern brick cannery were required to get the cows into neatly labeled cans after the round-up, the total ERA price tag wasn't to be sniffed at.

It would have been cheaper, no doubt, to have kept the cattle in fenced-in enclosures, assuming that they could have been provided. Since most of the steers were in poor physical condition, and infested with scab disease, they were no match for the swampy surroundings in which they fought hopelessly for survival.

ERA breathed a sigh of relief when the last grim chapter came to an end. The cows were gone, and with no cows to chase and shoot down the cowboys hung up their western gear. It hadn't been



CENTER OF ATTRACTION—Beth Lansche, New Bern's contribution to the crack Cypress Gardens ski team, is the middle performer for the group. Here the famed Aqua

Maids flash a welcome to admiring convention delegates who have gathered to see them in action.

Beth's Wonderful Moments Are Surpassing Cinderella's

Nice things are still happening to one of New Bern's nicest girls, Beth Lansche.

Ever since she became a member of the famed Cypress Gardens ski team after just six days of training, she has been a favorite with visiting tourists. And, best of all, she has endeared herself to those with whom she works.

That isn't surprising to New Bernians who know that the charm she possesses is further enhanced by her shy but unmistakable friendliness and her unflinching modesty.

In show business, and skiing at Cypress Gardens comes under this category—success is apt to inflate one's ego. In Beth's case, it would have been easy to go off the deep end.

From the comparative obscurity of her home town, she emerged into the limelight in the twinkling of an eye. She was young and inexperienced. Circumstances such as these would have turned many a pretty girl's head, but not Beth's.

To her everlasting credit, she remains unchanged. Typical of her deep gratitude to those who have helped her and wished her well is the way she responded to earlier stories and photographs we've carried about her in The Mirror.

Some folks take favorable mentions in the press for granted. Since the publicity given her in her home town weekly was only a drop in the bucket, compared with

too much fun anyway.

Such is the story of the Golden West that bloomed in Dixie. It bears out the fact that truth is stranger than fiction.

the national coverage accorded her, it didn't occur to us that she would telephone to express her thanks in as humble a manner as anyone could. But that's the way Beth is—thoughtful and appreciative.

If you're a reader of Look magazine, you probably saw her photograph in its pages a few weeks ago. You couldn't miss this Lansche smile. All of the Lansches have it, like their father before them, and we'd gladly match it against any smile in the world.

As we said at the outset, nice things are still happening to Beth, and getting her picture in Look was just one of them.

It will be soon World Series time and a manufacturer of outboard motors has filmed a Cypress Gardens commercial to be shown on television just before the baseball classic gets underway. We are happy to report that the New Bern girl is featured just as prominently as the motor.

Last, but by no means least, Hollywood is planning at this very moment a movie starring Debbie Reynolds that will portray the story of a typical Cypress Gardens Aqua Maid.

It won't be the true story of anyone's life, except in part, but every effort is being made to give a factual account of what being a water ski star involves.

That's where Beth comes in. The Hollywood writer assigned to do the story is now at Cypress Gardens. And, after all the girls on the ski team were interviewed, Beth was selected to help him prepare the script.

It's quite an honor for a youngster who is still a rookie. compar-

ed with the veteran performers who have been tops at Cypress Gardens for years. In short, the local girl's career is not just one Cinderella story, but several Cinderella stories rolled into one.

We hasten to add, however, that the many good things that have come to Beth weren't handed to her on a silver platter. Back of her Cypress Gardens success were long hours of practice on the Trent Pines course here.

She had her share of spills before she perfected the excellent skill and grace that earned her quick recognition at the most famous ski spot in America and the world.

Beth was ready, when she head-

ed south to Florida. In her heart she probably knew it. Everyone knows it now.

Continuing success for the local girl supports our contention that New Bernians can do anything that anyone else can do. They've demonstrated it repeatedly in every field of endeavor.

It's a sad commentary on human attitudes that most of us are skeptical about the worth and possibilities of those in our own midst. Distance lends enchantment, and almost without exception the person in some far-off place is given the benefit of the doubt rather than the home townner who goes forth to compete with them for recognition.

Worse than the skeptic who insists on being convinced, before jumping on the band wagon, is the belittler who tries to tear down those from their home town even after they have made their mark.

Such belittlers are in the minority, but it's too bad that the species isn't totally extinct. In Beth's case, she is so completely sweet and unassuming that the usual critics and belittlers have remained strangely silent.

The truth of the matter is that she possesses the qualities one invariably finds in those deserving of acclaim. Everyone who reaches the upper rungs of the ladder may not have those qualities, but the really "big" folks do. And of course there are "big" folks on the lower rungs too, rooting for those who pass them on the way up.

Down at Cypress Gardens, the officials say Beth is easy to work with, and eager to improve. She is regarded as a natural, when it (Continued on back page)

MARRIAGE LICENSES ISSUED

Walter Edward Golding of Bel-lows Falls, Va., and Lena Elizabeth Tilghman of New Bern.

Louis Cherny, Jr., of Bethlehem, Pa., and Patsy JoAnn Ulrich of Flint, Mich.

Edward Clarence Whitford of Bridgeton and Lillian Hester Price of Bridgeton.

Ebin Hardy Willis of Arapahoe and Margaret Ellen Wiley of route 1, New Bern.

Elmo S. Gaskins of Grimesland and Dorothy Grace Buck of Vanceboro.

John Roosevelt Blount of Dover and Mary Mabel Adams of New Bern.

David Odell Oates of Fort Barnwell and Cassie Marie Staton of Vanceboro.