

THE NEW BERN MIRROR

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RUMOR RUBBISH

Any newspaper editor who preaches against relying on rumors has nothing but a wasted sermon to show for his efforts. The wilder the story the quicker it is accepted, and passed along at face value to others.

Ridiculous enough at the outset, most misinformation grows increasingly distorted with each new telling. Strangely, it never gets so warped and fantastic that listeners begin to doubt it.

New Bernians, on a recent day, demonstrated the fact that they're just as gullible as anyone else. The story got going that teen-age gang violence was to be launched on a wholesale basis here between students and Marines. Soon the whole town was talking.

Our first knowledge of the rumor came from an approximately intelligent citizen who told us that he had learned "the teen agers are going to stage a riot and take over New Bern tonight." He looked for all the world like a frightened rabbit.

Later variations of the story had half of the Marines at Cherry Point invading the town, to be met in a mass battle by an army of teen-age civilians. It was going to be a real war, stemming from the now famous slaying that occurred in front of a skating rink on Craven street.

Everybody was so busy spreading the story that no one bothered to investigate. No one, that is, except authorities whose business it is to find the facts, and act accordingly.

Precautions were taken, and rightfully so. A rumor kicked around long enough can be an incendiary to twisted minds. Besides, a public display of law enforcement was bound to be reassuring to timid souls who were fearful of something akin to a full scale revolution.

Some New Bernians were so intimidated by the loose talk that they stayed away from the Friday night football game played at the High school stadium here. That's too bad, since the Bears defeated Goldsboro for their first victory of the season.

Apparently, very few citizens who swallowed the rumors—hook, line and sinker—stopped to think the matter through. It should have occurred to them that those who plan gang violence don't, as a rule, advertise their intentions.

What could be more idiotic than issuing bulletins to the effect that you are going to commit murder on a certain night in a certain place, at a certain hour? What purpose could it possibly serve?

Aside from alerting your intended victim or victims, you would become identified with the scheduled slaying. Having voiced your malice in the presence of others, you would be serving up to authorities all the proof needed to establish premeditation.

If your intended victim didn't kill you before you killed him, you would already have written your ticket for the gas chamber. What jury would recommend mercy in a case like that?

The Mirror is cognizant of the fact that the possibility of violence exists in every age group. We are not blind to the emotional instability of youthful hot heads, and all of us have had tragic examples of their acts paraded before us.

Theirs is the same emotional instability that every younger generation has been imbued with since the beginning of time. Any oldster who pretends that this generation is far worse than his own is a saintly hypocrite.

Yesterday's punks dressed differently than the punk of today, but they had the same characteristics. Probably, if you knew all the facts about a boy named Cain, who killed his brother Abel, you would discover that he was the first punk of all.

Fortunately, for every punk among our present teen agers there are countless kids with high ideals, a sense of decency and a respect for law and order. To put the label of badness on them is unfair and unwise.

The Mirror has faith in New Bern's youth, and it will take more than a wild rumor to convince us that they're a bunch of gansters.

Historical Gleanings

—By—

FRANCES B. CLAYPOOLE
and
ELIZABETH MOORE.

PETITIONS TO THE COURT OF CRAVEN COUNTY

1767, June. The petition of the inhabitants of Brice's Creek humbly show your Worships that an order of Court was obtained by James Davis, Esq., some time past for laying off a new road, leading out of Trent Road, over his mill across Neuse Road, over a large swamp;

And, Whereas, your petitioners have lately been at a great expense and trouble in making a new road a small distance above his mill and over Brice's Creek, we your petitioners humbly pray your worships that the order obtained by James Davis, Esq., as aforesaid may be vacated or laid aside as your poor petitioners are by no means able to support both roads and your petitioners as in duty bound shall every pray. BRICE'S CREEK, JUNE 1767.

John Smith, William Shepard Foster, Alexander Gaston, John Vickers, Thomas Smith, John Dunn, Richard Hickman, John Yeats, Benjamin B. Sanders, Peter Bootz, Charles Johnson, Arthur Johnson, John Smith, John Knox, Thomas Stevens, Benjamin Stevens, William Brockett.

December Court, 1770. To the Worshipful, the Inferior Court of Craven county, the inhabitants of the upper part of said county humbly show: That your petitioners on the South side of Vine Swamp and Beaver Creek labour under great hardship for want of a road as the road they are now obliged to work on is of no use to them by reason of the creek often being unpassable in the winter season, and as there is a sufficient number of hands left to maintain the road on the district, we petition the Court to appoint a jury to lay off a road from a road that is laid off in Dobbs county on the South side of the Vine Swamp from thence down near Frederick Becton's into Chinkapin Road near William Lavenadar's and we shall as in duty bound every pray. Frederick Becton, Hardy Bryan, Nathan Bryan, Isaac Bryan, Simon Edwards, James Turner. Granted.

1772, June. To the Worshipful, the Inferior Court of Craven county. The petition of the inhabitants and dwellers of Beard's Creek humbly showeth: That whereas, it is expected that Mr. John Carruthers, Esq., and Benjamin Williams, Esq., do intend to petition your Worships for the granting them an order to build a public mill over

Village Verses

GRATITUDE

For cupboards blessed with daily bread,
An easy chair, a clean white bed,
And baby feet that toddle on the floor;
For pipe dreams born of mellow smoke,
The kindly deeds of our neighbor folk,
And yellow light—trickling through a door.
The hymn of peace that our kettle sings,
We should give thanks for just such things.

—JGMcD.

the navigable streams of Beard's Creek, below many good boat landings and other landings, which is our common necessary landing, which will be greatly to the hurt of your petitioners. Samuel Lawson, John Miller, Henry Laur, John Linton, Samuel Hurer, John Vendrick, John Vendrick, Jr., Mathias Becton, Jr., Nehemiah Henry, Joseph Simpkins.

1782, June Court. William Dickson, overseer of the Neuse Road from the straight road to Pamlico. Lewis Jones, overseer from the ford to Swift Creek bridge, John Smith, overseer from the fork of Jumping Run, David Lewis, overseer from New Bern to the forks, John Nelson overseer in the room of Joel King from Swift Creek bridge. Benjamin Fulcher, overseer from Trent Bridge to Pamlico road. William Wilcox overseer from Harford Branch to Trent Bridge in room of John Morris. Worry Kilpatrick overseer in the district of Coor Creek on the East side of Samuel Slade. Jesse Holton exempted from working on the road and to help repair the causeway at Muckloops bridge.

Francis Fonvielle overseer from Jumping Run to Middle Branch. Joseph Jackson overseer from Whitehead's to Pitt Line run. James Carter overseer from Deep Gulley to New Bern. William Winn overseer from Hancock Creek bridge up to East Branch.

1785, December. To the Sheriff of Craven county, Greetings: You

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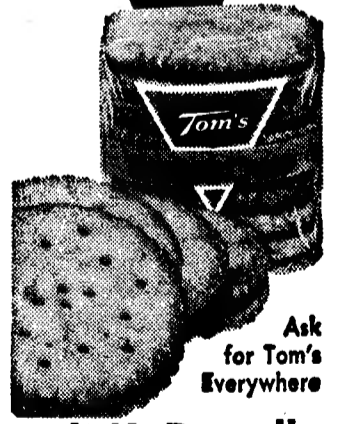
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