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New Bern Civitans couldn't have possibly lined up a better speaker for the North Carolina District Civitan International banquet Saturday night than Edmund H. Harding of Washington.

Billed as the Tar Heel Humorist, he has given his ludicrous talks in every nook and corner of the United States, and is so superior to the average comedian on television and at night clubs that there's no comparison.

This won't be Harding's first appearance here, but he is the sort of entertainer who can return again and again to familiar haunts and find a ready welcome waiting for him. It poses a problem, since repeat appearances necessitate a new batch of yarns, but he handles this matter very nicely.

Edmund leaves nothing to chance, when it comes to this. He keeps his jokes carefully indexed, and can tell you in a minute or two just what stories he used on such and such occasion. If an oldie crops up Saturday night, it will simply mean that the master gag spieler figured it was worth a second serving.

Well do we remember the first time we were privileged to hear Harding. It was in Greensboro, at a convention, and the name meant nothing to us when he was introduced as the speaker. He didn't look too impressive—and still doesn't—so his announced subject, "It's Later Than You Think," struck us as being a rather boring theme for the occasion.

To add to this dismal impression, Harding started off with a deliberate dullness that set his audience up for the humorous pitch that was to follow. Then he grabbed his accordion, played two or three tunes quite creditably and launched into the most hilarious collection of tales that his listeners had ever been treated to.

Edmund has the face and the voice to fit his profession. To scrutinize his countenance, you wouldn't give him credit for being an intellectual. But don't let that whimsical smirk of his fool you. This man has plenty of sound wisdom between his ears and his interests are many.

In his home town of Washington (the original) he is a devoted and valuable member of his church. And his keen appreciation of his history has been reflected in his untiring efforts to promote the preservation of Bath, the oldest town in our state.

Harding has exhibited a similar interest in New Bern's historical worth, and he turned down all engagements proffered him to be on hand for the big doings when Tryon Palace had its formal opening.

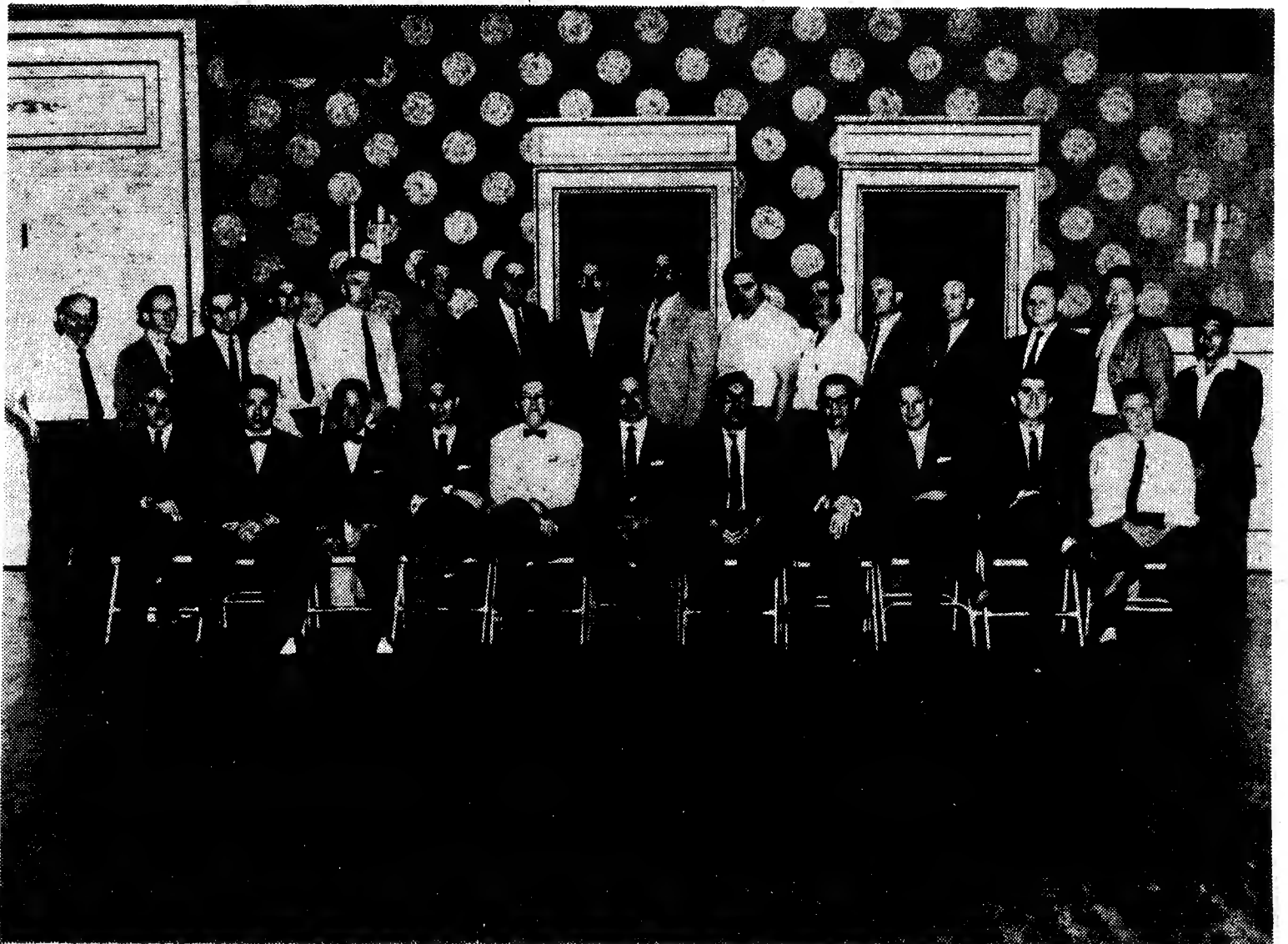
He is a world traveler, and gets a kick out of having himself photographed in comical situations and attire in far-off lands. He later uses these photos as illustrations for the thousands of Christmas cards he mails out during the Yuletide season.

A shrewd businessman, the drawing humorist finances his excursions to distant places by organizing tours for others and going along himself. There's no telling where he'll head for next, since he is running out of countries to visit.

As for the United States, he hasn't missed much of that either. Harding thinks nothing of hopping a fast plane to fill a speaking engagement on the Pacific coast or at some other spot that is just about as far removed from Washington.

His technique in delivering humorous talks is pretty much the same as the tried and true pattern adopted by other successful humorists before he came along. He spins yarns about his neighbors, and

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HAPPY HOSTS—Pictured here is the New Bern Civitan Club—winner of many coveted awards, including an International trophy presented at Colorado Springs last summer. Because of this great record, North Carolina Civitans

selected our city as the site for their annual convention. Several members—busy on projects—didn't get in the photograph, including the club's highly efficient secretary, Murray Fitterman.—Photo by Civitan John R. Baxter.

Tar Heel Civitans Converge On Their State's First Capital

Don't ask your favorite optometrist to check on the possibility of double vision, if you seem to be seeing more strangers in town than usual this May weekend.

Believe us, it's no optical illusion. Eight hundred or more fellow Tar Heels, plus a goodly number of out-of-State dignitaries, have swarmed into New Bern for the annual North Carolina District conventions of Civitan International and Junior Civitan International.

Last year, Asheville was the convention city, but this year by unanimous vote at the Asheville convention, the mountains that rise majestically in the Land of the Sky have been traded for the flat country and gently flowing streams that characterize our Land of Enchanting Waters.

It is a considerable compliment when a city as small as New Bern is chosen for the convention site. Ordinarily, the larger cities like Asheville, Greensboro, Winston-Salem or Charlotte would get the nod.

The truth of the matter is that New Bern Civitans did a bang-up job last May of selling delegates on their home town's charm. That they weren't exaggerating has become quickly evident to the men and women, and the boys and girls who journeyed here with high hopes of having their best convention yet.

In passing, it's worthy of mention that two other cities in eastern North Carolina put in plugs for New Bern at the Asheville convention. Both Rocky Mount and Wilmington's delegations allowed as how picking the historic first

State Capital would be no mistake.

Needless to say, local hotels and motels are crowded for the big event, and the facilities of Sudan Shrine Temple have been enlisted to house the boys here for the Junior Civitan International sessions. The girls are staying at the Earl of Craven Motel.

Civitan's rapid expansion in the Old North State is continuing, with 11 new clubs chartered since October. Included are Cary, Garner, Boone, Summerfield, Rhododendron (Asheville), Pleasant Grove, Fuquay-Varina, Clayton, Graham, Tarboro and Colfax.

Registrations for Senior Civitans, who are in the majority when it comes to the number of delegates here, began Thursday at 4 p.m. in the lobby of the Hotel Governor

Tryon.

The Governor's Cabinet Dinner Meeting was held Thursday night. Registration is continuing today, with an agenda that calls for the District Officers Breakfast at 8 a. m., group singing at 9:30 a. m. and formal opening of the annual convention at 9:45 a. m. in the Tryon's Empire Room. Governor W. Glenn Kennerly will preside.

President John B. Blaylock of the New Bern Civitan Club will extend its welcome, and Mayor Robert L. Stallings, Jr., will express the official welcome of the city of New Bern. Past District Governor J. Taft White will make the response.

Reports will consume much of Friday's important business sessions. At 7 p.m. the Convention

Dinner will be held in the New Bern Scottish Rite Temple, with Lt. Governor D. Livingstone Stallings of New Bern as toastmaster. A highlight of the evening will be the announcement of Essay Awards by Chairman Ike S. London of Rockingham.

Saturday's schedule includes the Past District Governor's Breakfast at 7:45 a. m., group singing at 9 a. m., and the resuming of the business session at 9:15 a. m. At this session the nominating committee will make the report, and North Carolina District officers will be elected and installed. A training conference for all 1960-61 officers is scheduled for 11 a. m. Following luncheon, the afternoon is to be free for tours of Tryon Palace.

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