



# The NEW BERN MIRROR

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New Bern's Lela Prescott Tarbox, who has authored one novel—"Sign In The Dust"—and is currently working on another, knows in full measure the joy of creative writing.

"After the tragic death of my husband in 1941," she told us in a Mirror interview the other day, "I seemed to have little interest in life. In other words, I seemed to be existing without a purpose. I began to look around for that purpose—a lifeline—and finally while going over my old files found the scattered pages of an unfinished book."

Picking up the long-neglected threads of her incomplete story, she wove a narrative that actually had its beginning years before she put the first words on paper. "Doing what can be done is the glory of living"—this quotation has remained with me all the way through the book," she says, "and somehow gave me the courage to keep on writing."

"I do not feel that all the glory for writing the book should go to me," Lela admits, "but to my father and to the unknown author who penned the above lines. And to others who have given me a helping hand in many ways."

The local author says, "the soul of my heroine" was born of a song her father sang once at a school commencement, titled "The Old Concert Hall." As she recalls, "He sang this song with so much feeling that my heroine was firmly pictured in my mind, and followed me all through the years to become a kind of companion."

Finally, Lela told us, she asked her father to tell her the story of the girl in the song. "The story was related to me in chapters in a way a child could understand," she explained. When the story was ended, her father added, "You may actually meet the girl in the concert hall sometime." And, as the years passed, these chapters were gradually unfolded, one by one, until at last the book was finished.

"Some years later," she remembers vividly, "I happened to stumble upon my title. My father had sent me to a little country store about half a mile away to purchase a plug of Brown's Mule tobacco. He also gave me a dime to purchase something for myself."

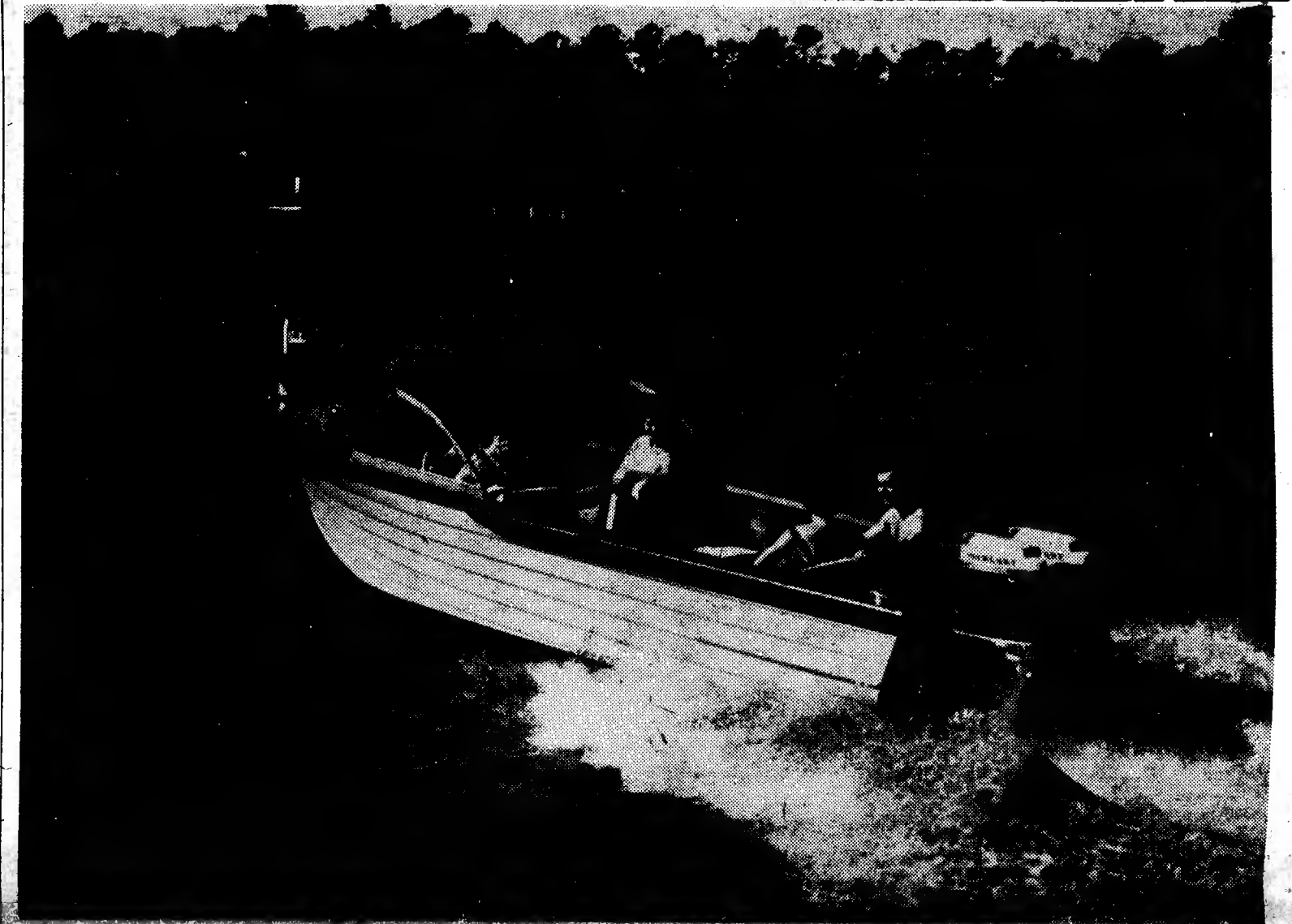
On the way to the store she met an elderly couple—barefoot and apparently poverty-stricken. As much as she valued the dime, and what it could purchase, she gave it to the couple.

"Coming back home from my mission, my heart felt light," she recalls, "yet I couldn't keep the tears back. My dime was gone for a good cause, but NO CANDY. Not wanting my father to know I had been crying over parting with my dime, I decided to stop at my grandmother's for awhile."

As she opened the old farm gate, there gleaming in the sand before her was a shiny dime. It even had the same date as her original dime—1904. "I held the coin tightly in my hand and pressed it to my heart," she says, "and this time there were tears of real joy because I felt heaven had rewarded me for my sacrifice. And it suddenly came to me—someday I'll write a book and call it 'The Dime In The Dust.' That's how the name of her novel—"Sign In The Dust"—was born.

"I have often wondered about this incident," Lela admits, "and I have asked myself many times whether the old couple could have realized the extent of my sacrifice, and, thinking my grandmother's home was my own, placed the dime there for me to find. This I'll never know, but I do know it was the very beginning of my book."

Friends and casual acquaintances are quite familiar with Lela's love for animals. She digs deep in-



LAST FLING—Winter's icy blasts, with sleet and possible snow, are just around the corner in the Carolina coast country. Meanwhile, the wistfully tender beauty of a lingering

Indian summer has been inviting New Bernians to cruise on the picturesque waters of the rippling Neuse and Trent.—Photo by Billy Benners.

## What Hadassah Speaker Said Has Made Lasting Impression

New Bern, through the years, has had its share of interesting visitors. Human nature being what it is, most of these strangers who pause briefly in our midst are quickly forgotten.

Not so with Lucien Harris, director of the Hadassah Information Service in Israel, whose recent talk here keeps bobbing up in the minds of those who heard it. Obviously a dedicated man, his firm belief that world peace can and will come to troubled mortals is a contagious thing.

Because Harris, his high ideals notwithstanding, is a practical and realistic individual it is hard to shrug off his dream of global brotherhood. In Israel he has personally witnessed the remarkable blending of immigrants from a hundred different lands into a Democracy of well established institutions.

Jews and Arabs are slowly but surely reaching a common ground of understanding, Harris told The Mirror during his short stay in this city. Considering deep enmity that extends back into the haziness of antiquity, this is no small accomplishment.

Israel has its local and central governments, its just and respected courts, and compulsory primary education for children between the ages of five and 14. As Harris says, industrially and agriculturally, Is-

rael is literally making the desert blossom like the rose. What has been achieved in establishing improved relations between Jews and Arabs, and in blending outsiders of many nationalities, wasn't done by force. The Golden Rule—a basic part of every major religion known to man—has done what armed might could never do.

Israel is no Utopia—not yet—but it has come a long way in a short period of time. For example, mother and child clinics have been gratefully welcomed by the Arabs, and the country points proudly to the fact that it has one of the low-

est infant mortality rates in the world. Other health services have been extended into Arab villages, and rural vocational centers have been set up. Enlightenment, not just for the Arabs but for all peoples who have converged on Israel, from the four corners of the earth, is paving the way for understanding and unity.

Hadassah, the largest women's organization in the world and easily one of the most charitable, has made much of the progress in Israel possible. Here in New Bern, the Jewish women who comprise the Hadassah membership are tire-

less in their work for the organization, and liberal with their own giving to the worthy cause they represent.

Undoubtedly, the objectives already reached in Israel are a source of gratification to these women, who perhaps more than any other New Bernians are keenly aware of the challenge that is posed for those who earnestly and actively strive for world peace.

Born in Antwerp, Belgium, Harris learned early about the horrors of war. His first childhood memories are of a homeland that was ravaged by the Germans in World War I, and he was living in England during World War II when Hitler's bombers tried repeatedly to make a shambles of the British Isles, and almost succeeded.

Harris graduated with Honors in Classics and Law from Oxford University. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946, and rose to the rank of Flight Lieutenant. He and his wife, the former Marie Polinsky, were among the first families from the West to settle in Israel after the establishment of the State.

A lover of nature, he was quite impressed by the beauty of North Carolina's countryside when he came here. Israel isn't blessed with trees in profusion, as is the Old North State, and he was intrigued by the ones he saw in and around New Bern.

Lucien Harris had a real message in his heart, when he arrived in this city. Here was a man who not only dreamed of world peace, but was convinced that the dream can come true. He'll be remembered, along with his words, for a long long time.



LUCIEN HARRIS  
... Visualizes Peace