



The NEW BERN MIRROR

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Each Sunday morning, along about dawn, one of New Bern's street cleaners tidies up Middle street so that it will have a respectable Sabbath appearance.

We always meet him when we're going to or from one of the downtown restaurants for that first cup of coffee. He is courteous, calls us by name, and is numbered among our friends.

Last Sunday, as the first rays of the sun were breaking through, we spied him standing by a parking meter near the Elks Temple corner. He had paused with his broom, and was gazing intently at an object on the sidewalk.

When we arrived at the scene, he pointed to the body of a cardinal lying at his feet. Gone was the exuberant song of the proud little creature, and its once bright eyes were fixed in the sightless stare of death. Only its brilliant plumage remained unchanged, speaking eloquently of past grandeur.

"I wonder why he died here," the soft-spoken Negro street cleaner murmured. "Maybe he struck a wire and was electrocuted." This hardly seemed likely, since touching a single strand that was charged wouldn't be lethal unless contact was made with some other object.

You could tell the street cleaner wasn't exactly happy about doing it, but he scooped the cardinal up, hesitated a moment, and then deposited the little bundle of red in his trash can.

The early beams of sunlight were pushing their way through the overcast, and across the street in Christ Episcopal churchyard hundreds of more fortunate birds were singing in unison.

Looking rather sad, being of the sentimental sort, the street cleaner trudged on down the street. And a newspaperman, who loves birds too, continued to the usual restaurant for his cup of coffee, and some serious afterthoughts about life and death.

Most New Bernians either have implicit faith in the honesty of other people, or else they're thoughtless or mighty careless. In your own case, the chances are you rarely ever count your change when you make a purchase, unless there's considerable money involved in the transaction.

Under such circumstances, it would not only be easy to short-change you but make you the victim of a phoney or plugged coin. Come to think of it, you seldom see coins with holes in them nowadays, although they were fairly prevalent a generation or so ago.

Apparently money passes through our hands these days so quickly that there's hardly time to mutilate it. Besides, kids probably did most of the mutilating in the old days, and the modern youngster is too busy asking for folding money to bother about drilling holes in unimportant dimes or nickels.

If you're like us, you've been under the mistaken impression that air conditioning is a modern invention. Actually it dates back at least as far as 1902, and started in Brooklyn, of all places.

That year, in one of the sultriest July months to ever plague Flatbush, a printing plant discovered that weather changes made its paper stock expand and contract to an alarming degree.

In fact, the fluctuation was so severe the firm couldn't print its multi-color jobs accurately. The colors missed their mark more often than not, so the owners of the plant turned in desperation to a young engineer named Willis Haviland Carrier, who was just out of college.

He first resorted to a fan that blew across a continuous strip of



AN INTRIGUING PAST—Historic landmarks abound to such an extent in New Bern that they are almost commonplace. Few homes, however, here or elsewhere, are as close-

ly associated with memorable events of a bygone day as this frame dwelling at the corner of New and Metcalf streets. You'll agree after reading the article below.

A Million Memories Mingle Within a Stately Old House

By FREDERICK R. BOYD

There are perhaps some houses that were built earlier—some more stately—but it is safe to say that no other residence in New Bern can approach it in its 190-year-old religious, fraternal, legal and business history.

Such a description accurately applies to the large frame dwelling on the northeast corner of New and Metcalf streets that the Board of Education of the City of New Bern recently purchased and restored, for use as administrative offices of the city school system.

It was once owned by the daughter of one of the founders of New Bern's First Presbyterian church. Three of her 10 children became Episcopal ministers. Another, a prominent attorney, was Worshipful Master of St. Johns Masonic Lodge for four terms.

The last Royal Chief Justice of the Colony of North Carolina organized this Masonic Lodge in New Bern while an owner of the house. The first Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, and the first Attorney-General and later a Justice of the Louisiana Su-

preme Court each lived in it. The first recorded owner of the lot was Robert Palmer of Bath-

town, a member of the Colonial Council. He purchased it from the Town of New Bern for 20 shillings in 1767. He signed an agreement with the Town Commissioners that he would erect a building, without shed, of at least 24 feet long by 16 feet wide within 18 months, or else the property would revert to the town.

Martin Howard, first Worshipful Master and founder of the local Masonic Lodge, and Chief Justice of the Royal Colony of North Carolina from 1767 to 1773, bought the property in 1771 for 375 pounds.

He owned a plantation—"Rich-

mond"—in Craven county near New Bern, so it is possible that the residence on New street could have been his "Town House." Howard was prominent in colonial affairs in Rhode Island, from whence he came, and in North Carolina. Though a loyalist, he was greatly respected, especially by members of the legal profession.

Judge Howard possibly added to or completely rebuilt the house on this property, for William Tisdale paid 600 pounds when he purchased it in 1776.

Tisdale was a gold and silversmith. He also was an engraver. The first General Assembly of the State of North Carolina commissioned him to engrave the first Great Seal of the State of North Carolina.

Francois Xavier Martin, de Fontegate, patriot, prominent attorney, printer and long an active leader

in St. Johns Lodge, purchased the home in 1796 for 600 pounds.

Two law books he printed in the 1790's are now owned by the Tryon Palace Commission. He was appointed a Federal judge in the Territory of Mississippi, and after the Louisiana Purchase became the first Attorney-General and later Chief Justice of Louisiana.

Martin sold the house and lot to John Louis Taylor for 550 pounds in 1798. Taylor was very prominent in Masonic leadership, and as an attorney. He was a brother-in-law of Judge William Gaston.

He was Worshipful Master of St. Johns during the year 1806-7. Gertrude Carraway writes in "Years of Light", Page 110, "As the fifth Grand Master of Masons in this state, Taylor was one of the most prominent Masons for many years in New Bern and North Carolina."

On Page 75 she writes: "The McClure funeral (General William McClure, Revolutionary surgeon) was held here November 18, 1804, from the residence of the Most Worshipful Grandmaster J. L. Taylor of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. His house was on the northeast corner of New and Metcalf streets on property he purchased in 1798 from Francis X. Martin and sold in 1812 to Asa Jones."

He was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of N. C. 1803-5 inclusive, and again 1815-17 inclusive. In January 1819 he became the first Chief Justice of the first Supreme Court of North Carolina, and kept this high position until he died in January, 1829, in Ra-

leigh.

Asa Jones paid \$3,500 for the property. He had lived in his home on the corner of Union (now Johnson) and East Front streets, next door to the brick residence now owned by D. L. Ward. This house was sold to Dr. Moses Jarvis for \$7,688. (Book 38, Page 395, Register of Deeds.)

His wife, Sally Bryan, suffered from "swamp fever"—now known as malaria—and on their doctor's advice moved to a dwelling on higher ground. Jones was a vestryman in Christ Church, and at one time was an officer of St. Johns Lodge.

His main interests were turpentine stills and shipping. The stills were located at the northwest corner of Eden and South Front streets (Mrs. F. C. Roberts' "Old Inhabitants of New Bern")—just across from where the beautiful Maude Moore Lathan Memorial Garden is now.

Asa Jones was a large land owner and possessed many slaves. "His grandfather, Evans Jones, whose brother Roger was beheaded by Indians, settled in Craven county on Clubfoot and Slocum creeks about 1710" (Vass' New Bern Presbyterian Church, Page 131.)

When Jones died a widower and childless in 1840, he willed his property to John M. Roberts, a banker who had married his favorite niece, Mary. Her father, John Jones, was one of the founders of the New Bern Presbyterian church. (Vass, Page 131.)

Robert was for many years a (Continued on Back Page)