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Many New Bernians are convinced that hurricanes come oftener nowadays than they used to in the long ago. There is little basis for such a belief, although modern communications, expert tracking, and widespread news coverage tend to make it appear that way.

History dating back hundreds of years reveals that the big blows were playing havoc along our Atlantic coast when the first white man arrived, and it seems reasonable to assume that the American Indian had already endured countless years of periodic high winds.

New Bern, founded in 1710, didn't have to wait very long for its first taste of hurricane weather. A severe tropical disturbance came roaring out of the Caribbean the following year, and another followed in 1713. We can't be sure what section of the coast got the brunt of the storms, but for all we know this budding town might have been right in the center of it.

Both of the aforementioned hurricanes came in September like Hurricane Esther, the latest of the lot. As a matter of fact, records show that the first such wind to rake Atlantic shores and find its way into the annals of history was also in September. The year, we are told, was 1575.

There have been hundreds of September hurricanes since then, and at least one of them each year since 1806. Some of them, fortunately, vented their violence in the open sea, but enough of them reached land to kill thousands of people.

Property damage has amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars. The toll in money, here in New Bern, was approximately 15 million dollars for Hurricane Ione. It far exceeded the two and a half million dollars damage that resulted from the disastrous fire on December 1, 1922, when 40 residential blocks were reduced to ashes and 2,000 persons were left homeless. Admittedly, the loss would have been greater had not a majority of the homes been shanties. And of course all property — not just shanties — carried a much lower valuation then than it does today.

All hurricanes foster tragedy, and we've encountered countless things of a pathetic nature during the 30 years we've been covering them for United Press and International News Service (now combined as United Press International) and for various State papers and for radio.

There was the time when an elderly man rushed out of his home, when he heard fire trucks arriving to fight a blaze in the neighborhood. He came in contact with a live wire that had fallen in the street. His wife ran to his side in a futile effort to rescue him. Both were electrocuted.

Needless to say, we'll never forget wading in waist deep water on lower New street, with other searchers, trying to locate the body of a child who had drowned when he ventured from his porch.

It seemed unbelievable that his little form could vanish on a city street, and remain lost in the surging waters. When the rampaging Neuse returned to its rightful place, as the winds subsided, the grim secret came to light. He was found under the front steps of his own home.

There have been humorous situations too, like the time we were evacuating a little old lady whose name we won't mention. Although the storm was already raging, she wouldn't come out of her house until she was primly dressed. We were wading in chest-deep water, and anxious to get her away from there.

Just as we managed to put her in the skiff, her hat flew off. She was quite upset about losing that bonnet, and fretted over its departure on the wings of the wind while we pulled

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THEY STRUT FOR BEARS—Pictured here are the six New Bern High school Majorettes who add color to football games played here this season. Last Friday night they had plenty to be gay about, as the Bruins romped to a 19-0

victory over Washington's Pam-Pack. Left to right are Head Majorette Donna Jo Bell, Nancy Masters, Laurel Cox, Karen Higgins, Jessie Ruth Arthur, and Mary Beth Armstrong.—Photo by John R. Baxter.



A HARD MAN TO STOP—Donald Davis, who scored two touchdowns for the New Bern High school Bears last Friday night, didn't give up easily when he carried the ball. This excellent photo by Johnny Williams—his first publish-

ed one—proves Donald's durability, as three members of the Washington Pam-Pack fight desperately to put the brakes on him. Another Bruin stalwart Ronald Wallace, also scored a touch down, and performed well.