



# The NEW BERN MIRROR

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If memory serves us correctly, it was just about nine years ago that strange things were happening at the Centenary Methodist parsonage here. Moses, a pet cat, had shown signs of turning Baptist and there didn't seem to be much that the Rev. John A. Russell and his family could do about it.

Not that the good parson was particularly disturbed. His reputation for tolerance was exceeded only by his remarkable knack for getting churches built, while holding earlier pastorates at Roxboro, Four Oaks, Snow Hill, Durham and Wilmington.

While at Dunn he didn't get a new church erected, but the old one was thoroughly done over. At Hamlet the church debt was paid off and the mortgage burned, and here at Centenary he successfully launched a program for a new educational building that now bears his name.

But let's leave the subject of the Rev. Mr. Russell, and get back to Moses. Having filled up and filled out on choice Methodist vittles, the carefree cat decided to hibernate in the parsonage's upstairs bath tub.

Freely flowing faucets fascinated the fatted feline, and a fish wouldn't have been happier as long as there was enough water to tide him over. But for the minister's granddaughter, Miriam Duncan — then 12 — Moses would have switched denominations. He adored her.

Long before the cat became a star boarder at the parsonage, Miriam had her heart set on acquiring a kitten. The rest of the family took a dim view when her desire was announced, but the hankering persisted.

Fate stepped in, and brought things to a climax. One day Miriam accompanied her grandfather when he took the family laundry to a wash woman who lived across Trent river, in James City. There, in bull-rushes near the wash-woman's little house, she found the kitten she had dreamed about and begged for.

In the Bible, Miriam found Moses in the bull-rushes, so when the Miriam in this story carted her cat home to the parsonage it was unanimously agreed that he should be named Moses too.

Moses was purr-fectly happy in his new surroundings. If he disliked being a Methodist, he certainly didn't make an issue of it. He grew like a weed in a flower garden, and soon took charge of the household.

A few months later another cat, a scrawny stray, became acquainted with Moses, while the two were meandering in neighboring backyards. Moses invited the stranger to come live at the parsonage, and it looked as if another Methodist had been added to Centenary's roster of 1,500 members.

Since there was no mistaking the close friendship between Moses and the newcomer, it was decided to name him Joshua. Unlike Moses, Joshua got quickly fed up with living in a Methodist parsonage, and headed for St. Paul's Catholic rectory across the street.

And then Moses turned Baptist, and took over the aforementioned bath tub. Never let it be said, however, that the Baptists don't know good food. They invariably prove their gastronomical enthusiasm at Sunday school picnics. Since such is the case, Moses elected to continue his residence at the Methodist parsonage.

His monopoly of its bath tub proved to be a great inconvenience to members of the household. However, the Russells, being life-long Methodists, knew full well that you can't win an argument with a het-up Baptist, so they didn't make an issue of the cat's selfishness.

That was by no means the end of the story, although the future editor of *The Mirror* figured it was and did a story about Moses for the Raleigh News and Observer and other

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THEY HAD FUN—Amateur radio operators from three states are seen here enjoying a "ham fest" staged by the Carolina Coastal Net at Union Point. This is only part of

the group that attended. Host for the event was the dean of Tar Heel hams, New Bern's nationally recognized Albert Parker.—Photo by Billy Benners.



JUDGES LIKED IT—Pictured here is one of the prize-winning exhibits at the first annual Craven County Jaycee Fair and Exposition held here. A creation of the Pleasant Hill 4-H Club, the display embodied expert carpentry, original-

ty and clever presentation of the theme. Local Jaycees are to be commended for the fine start made with their project.—Photo by John R. Baxter.