

The NEW BERN MIRROR

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We've never had the slightest desire to be away from New Bern during the Christmas holidays, but our choice if we got the urge would probably be Maplewood, New Jersey.

To the best of our knowledge, there isn't a living soul there we know, but it sounds like the sort of a town where the Yuletide spirit abounds. Maybe we'll land there someday in this grandest season of all, or perhaps a few of our readers will.

Displaying community cooperation to the fullest extent, citizens of Maplewood turn it into a storybook village in which young and old alike play what has been termed "an enchanted game of make-believe."

In this wonderful world of once-upon-a-time, carolers see to it that there is no lack of Christmas music, day in and day out, on the village green. With a setting like that, getting Christmas in your bones is as easy as falling off a log — a Yule log that is.

Merchants get into the act too, by wearing wide-winged collars and colorful ascots and waistcoats. Salesladies are adorned in mobcaps and frilly organdy pinafores. Windows are taped to represent tiny leaded panes.

Emphasizing the theme of Charles Dickens' beloved Christmas Carol, and giving the town a look of Merrie Olde England, Maplewood's officials selected Tiny Tim to pull the switch that lighted the community Christmas tree. Proudly standing by were all the members of the Cratchit family.

The idea for Maplewood's unusual way of celebrating and decorating was born at a meeting of the city's merchants. Not entirely satisfied with their routine display of overhead lights and tinsel trappings, they remembered Mr. Dickens and decided to stress the season's true spirit of giving.

Business establishments were actually renamed to make the illusion even more convincing. A bank became Ye Counting House, a real estate firm became Ye House and Cottager, and a beauty shop became Milady's Wig and Patches.

A town crier and a lamplighter were appointed. At the local high school the students in manual-training classes made metal hoods for street lights. Placed over the lights they gave the appearance of gas lamps.

Whether other towns will follow the pattern set by citizens of Maplewood remains to be seen. New Bern's presentation of a tableau, with choirs and a band, was a new venture this year in lieu of a Christmas parade.

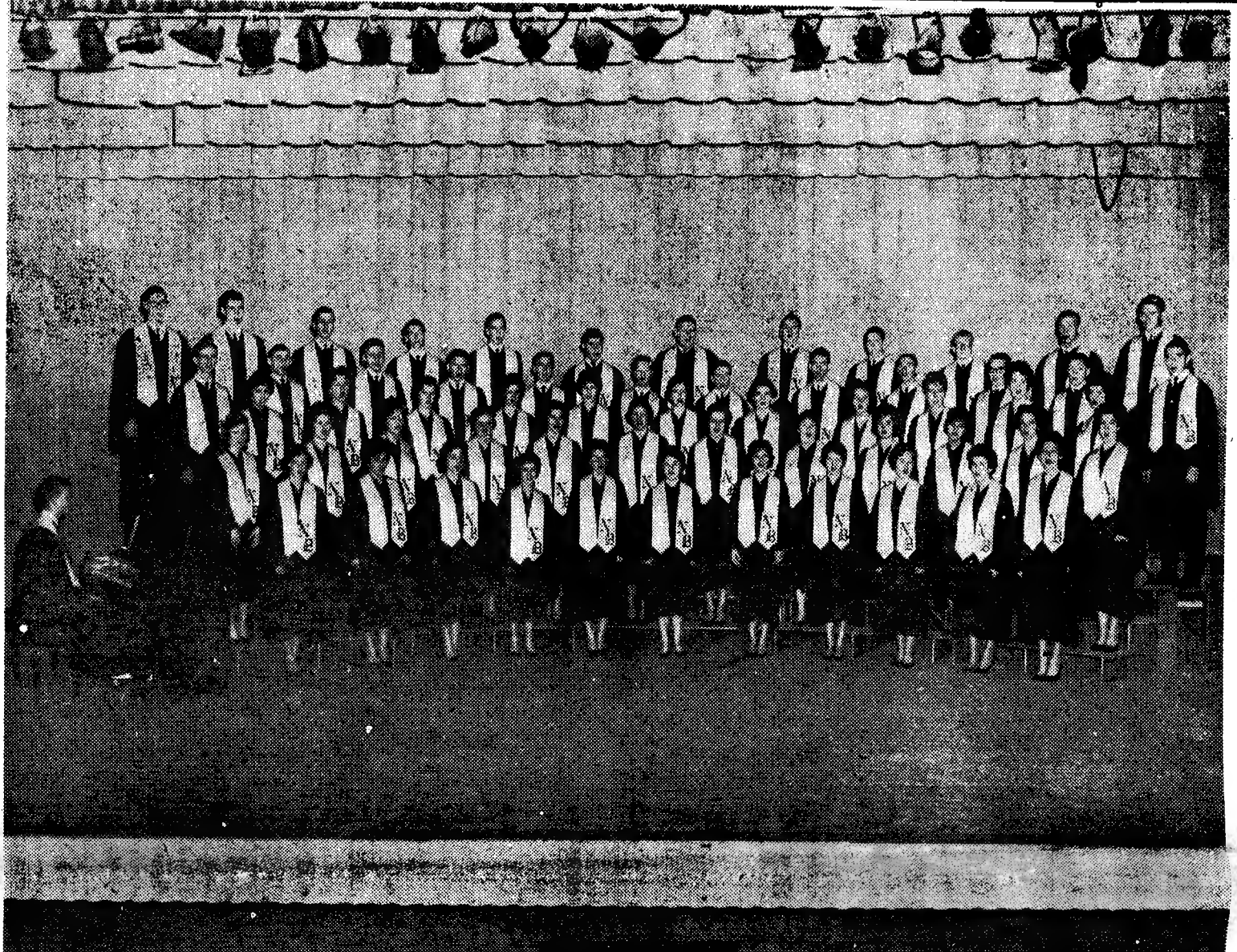
To our way of thinking, the performance was creditable. Many had lamented the fact that the usual parade was vetoed in favor of the program presented in front of New Bern's post office. Some, we feel sure, felt less critical after viewing the tableau, but approval of the venture was by no means close to unanimous.

Although the program was attended by quite a crowd, the number of persons witnessing it was only a fraction of the crowds that have turned out for Christmas parades in the past.

It didn't help matters when the temperature dropped sharply. No one particularly enjoys standing in one spot for an hour, when the weather is uncomfortably cold. However, waiting for a parade on a chilly curb can be rather unpleasant too.

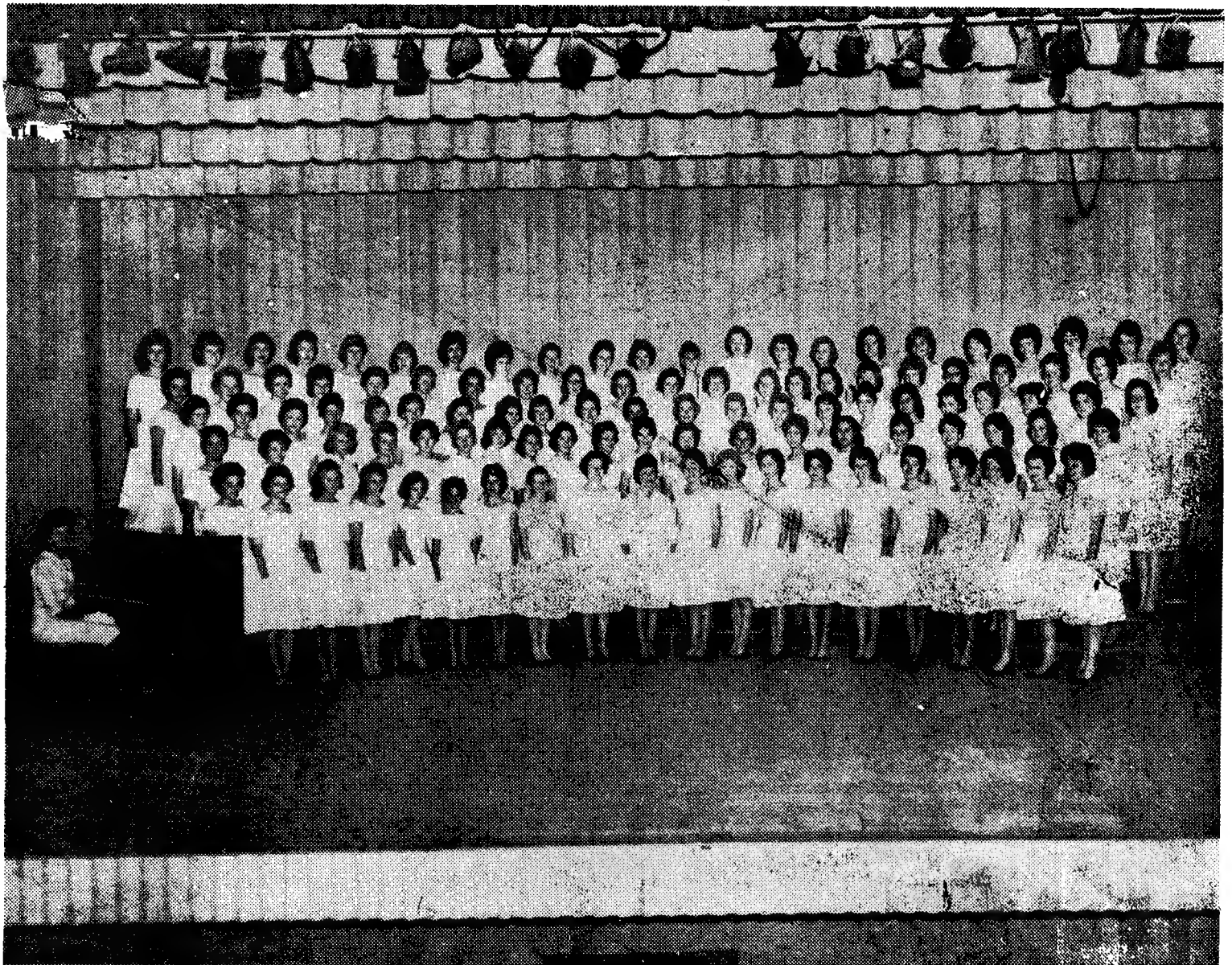
As far as the kids were concerned, the big event of the evening was the appearance of Santa Claus. What went before, commendable though it was, had much greater appeal for adults and teen agers than it did for children who are at the age to

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MUSIC AT ITS BEST—Pictured here is the New Bern High school choir, famed for excellence year in and year out. With Donald Smith conducting and Jimmy Meredith at the keyboard, these talented youngsters will present their

Christmas concert, along with the boys and girls glee clubs, Tuesday night at the High School Auditorium.—Photo by Johnny Williams.



QUALITY AND QUANTITY—This year the New Bern High school girls glee club is the largest ever, with 112 votes. Louise Whitty is accompanist for the group. Like the High school choir and boys glee club, they have labored tireless-

ly under the direction of Donald Smith to make Tuesday night's Christmas concert an event to be remembered.—Photo by Johnny Williams.