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New Bernians of the current generation, like their parents and grandparents before them, are inclined to get the blues when things aren't going well. But in the old days, folks not only got the blues, they sang about them with considerable frequency.

W. C. Handy started the trend with his incomparable "St. Louis Blues." After his notable success arrived on Melody Lane, to stay there for decades, every composer along Tin Pan Alley turned paid mourner and got into the act. Cheerful lyrics, it was agreed, were a liability.

Among the dirges that enjoyed excellent record sales in this town of ours was a disc Ted Lewis and his orchestra made, entitled "Lonesome and Blue." The high-hat tragedian of jazz went all out on this one, and even the most stoic citizens here felt chokey every time they played his rendition on the parlor phonograph.

Bert Lown did almost as well with his "Bye Bye Blues." That is, he did well temporarily, but the tune had entirely too much sunshine in its lilting notes to endure. People had become hardened by the Great Depression, and demanded detailed lamentations when they visited music stores.

Just how well our wants were supplied by Tin Pan Alley is indicated by a few of the song titles in that era. A gent named Joshua White, who sang through his nose, built up a nice bank account by recording a dismal ditty called "Black and Evil Blues." He sobbed his way to still more riches by cabbaging onto another miserable masterpiece, "Bad Depression Blues."

Meanwhile, a character identified only as Big Bill on his numerous hillbilly waxings came up with what appeared to be a major calamity of some sort. The song's title was "Bull Cow Blues" and it was rather surprising to see how many of New Bern's citizens spent their rent and food money for this disc.

Lulu Williams made her contribution to the weeping and wailing with "Little Brother Blues" and "Careless Love Blues." Gene Autrey, the singing cowboy who was destined to become a millionaire and own a chain of radio and television stations after starring in the movies, reaped considerable gold from "T. B. Blues" and "Wild Cat Mama Blues."

Songs of this sort were much more refined, of course, than the tunes you teen agers go for today. At least, that's what Mom and Pop, and Grandma and Grandpa, would have you believe.

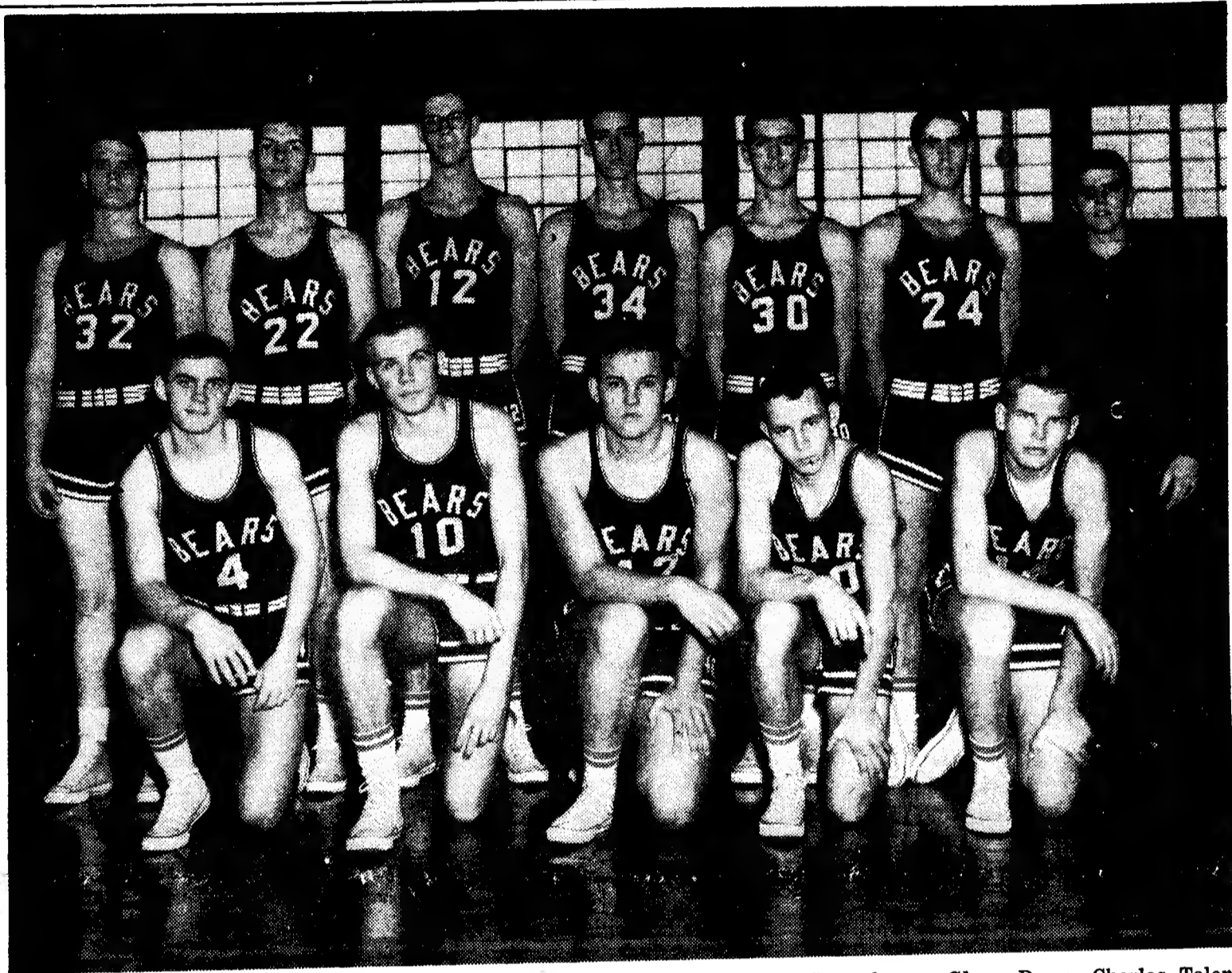
We'll agree that a great deal of the popular music turned out in recent years is downright awful. As we listen to it with the ears of an oldster, it seems unbelievable that anyone could possibly enjoy it. But enjoy it they do, so who are we to argue?

Elvis Presley at his wiggling and hollering worst (he has tamed down a lot) was never as acrobatic and as loud as Cab Calloway used to be a third of a century ago. Holding forth at Harlem's Cotton Club, he was the top attraction on America's airlines, with "Hidey-Ho" yells that made the mountains tremble and his millions of admirers squeal with delight.

Every generation has its outlandish songs, and its screwball vocalists to put them across. In the final analysis, the blame for such atrocities, if blame should be meted out, belongs with a public that not only accepts the discordant hogwash, but clamors for still more of it.

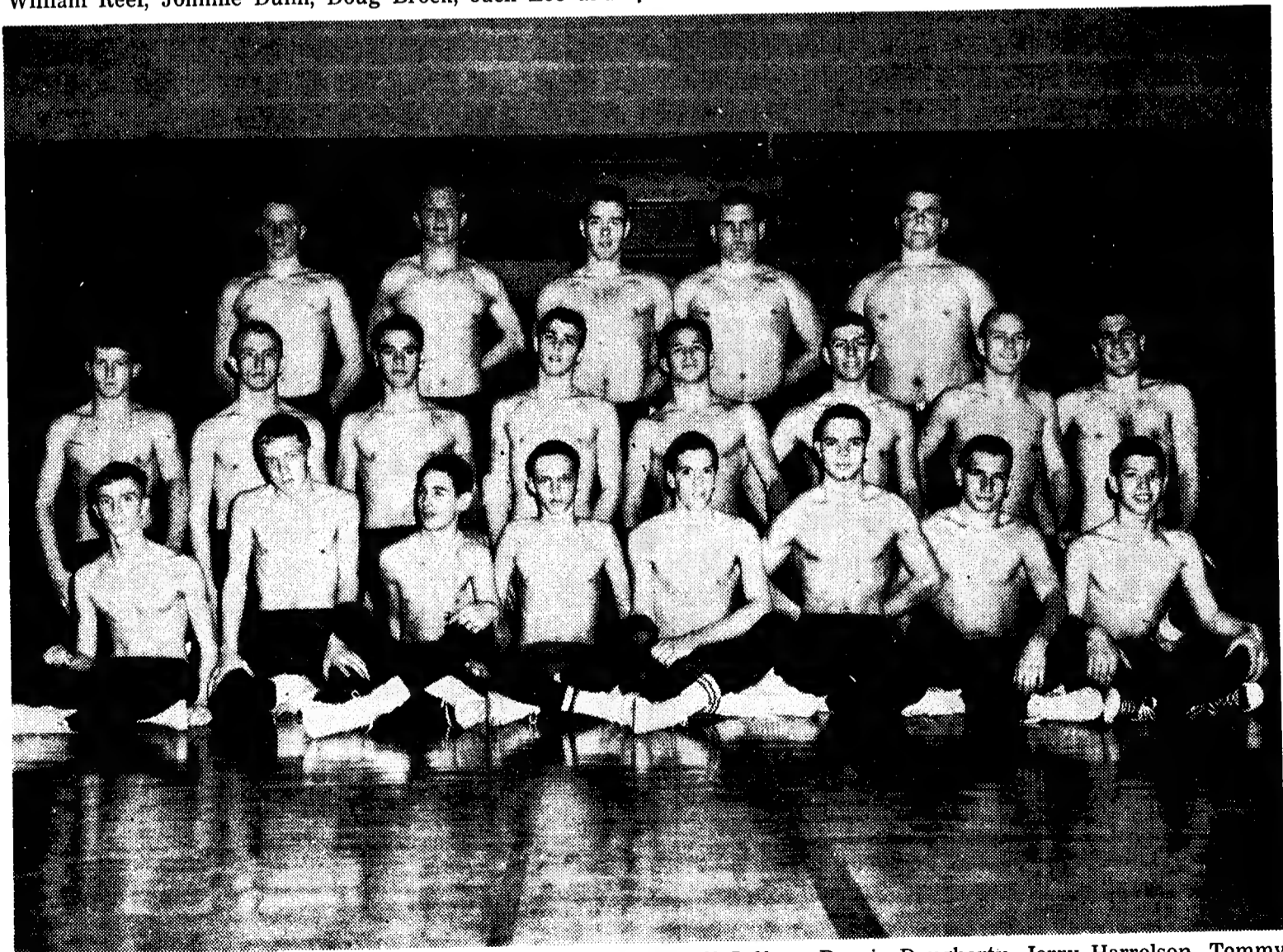
Teen agers have always provided the impetus for our song fads, just

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HOPING TO REPEAT—New Bern High school's fine basketball team is determined to register its second victory over Roanoke Rapids, when the Northeastern Conference leaders come to town tonight. Left to right, first row, are William Reel, Johnnie Dunn, Doug Brock, Jack Lee and

Ken Peterson. Second row, Glenn Dunn, Charles Toler, Donald Flynn, Speedy Bunting, Charles Stovall, Roland Verrone, and Butch Ricks. They are coached by Bob Lewis.—Photo by John R. Baxter.



FAMILIAR PATTERN—Successful wrestling teams have become a pleasant habit at New Bern High school, and this year's outfit is no exception. Left to right, first row, are Joe Moore, Ronnie Oliver, Mike Edwards, Tommy Willis, Steve Eubanks, Doug Hadder, Mike Moran, Ray Tingle. Second Row, Roger Lee, Charles Wiley, Larry Wallace,

Jeff Jeffray, Reggie Daugherty, Jerry Harrelson, Tommy Marsh and Dale Goodman. Third row, Jimmy Sheppard, Charles Rhue, Ronald Wallace, John Bayliss and Bob Campbell. The grapplers are coached by Bill Klutz.—Photo by John R. Baxter.