

The NEW BERN

# MIRROR

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October is an ideal month for any New Bernian who wants to turn amateur astronomer. Moving from northeast to southwest, the Milky Way passes almost directly overhead, and is an awe inspiring sight.

Millions of stars too faint to be seen individually from our earth combine their light to form the Milky Way. Venus reached its maximum brightness last Monday. For several days it has been visible in the western sky two hours after sunset, but by the end of the month it will be lost in the glare of the sun, which it is now rapidly approaching.

One thing is certain, America's astronauts and space explorers representing other countries needn't worry about running out of places to head for. If you have normal vision, you can see approximately 4,000 stars, and any local citizen with keen eyesight can see 6,000 — although not all at the same time.

With a telescope, astronomers are confronted with so many heavenly bodies that it is impossible to count them. Their estimates as to the number of stars in the Milky Way alone range from 30 billion to more than 100 billion. Nikita Khrushchev would no doubt like to claim them all for Russia, but it will take him a little time to land on each of them.

For our part, we have no desire to get that far away from home, however, one of these days it would be nice to visit Hannibal, Missouri. Mark Twain's boyhood home is still very much the same as it was when Twain invented two youngsters — Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn — and used them to exemplify the real-life joys he and other kids shared on the west bank of the Mississippi.

You'll recall that Tom Sawyer's sweetheart was named Becky Thatcher, and there really was a Becky Thatcher. Or to be exact, there was a girl named Laura Hawkins, who lived across the street from Mark. She was a lifetime friend of the immortal author, and inspired him to create Becky for millions of people the world over.

The Clemens house, built by Mark's father in 1844, still stands on Hill street. Jackson's Island remains, with its cottonwoods and willows, to invite small boys who want to play pirate, and the cave that intrigued Tom Sawyer and Becky Thatcher is still a favorite spot for Hannibal's children to roam, with miles of passages.

We doubt that anyone in New Bern, past or present, who has read the works of Mark Twain was inclined to forget Tom Sawyer's fence episode. You'll recall that he not only got other boys to whitewash the fence for him, but made them pay for the privilege by parting with their most prized possessions.

The original fence that surrounded the Clemens home is no longer standing, but it has been replaced with one just like it. Incidentally, the Hannibal Junior Chamber of Commerce stages a Tom Sawyer fence-painting day each August, and boys representing towns from every section of Missouri compete.

Fifty two years have come and gone since Mark Twain passed away, but the town he lived in from the age of four to the age of 18 is still enveloped in the charm he immortalized with his writings. He was christened Samuel Langhorne Clemens, but in Hannibal like the rest of the world it is his catchy pen name rather than his legal name that people instantly recognize.

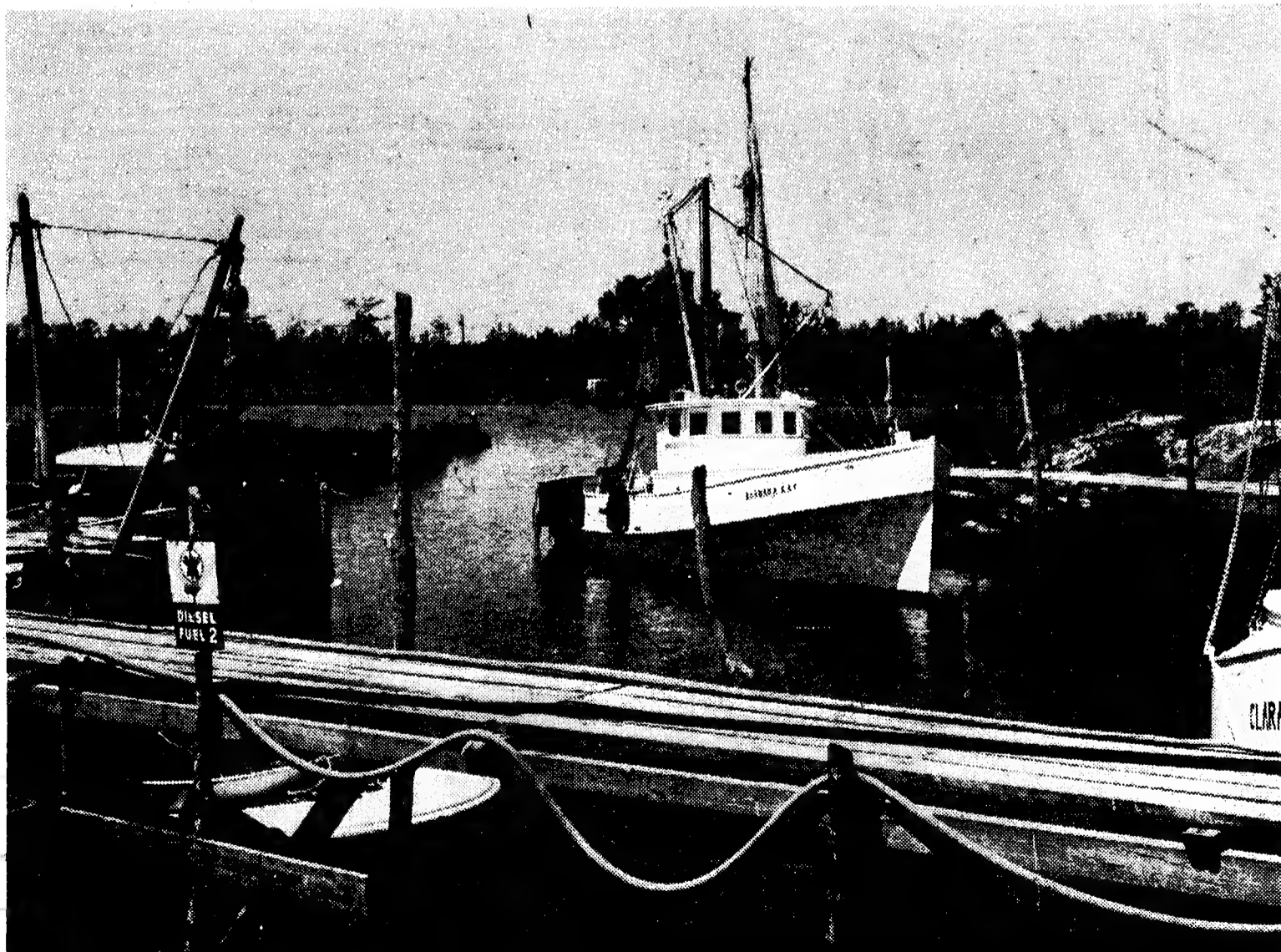
Fortunately, Twain's boyhood home — complete with most of its priceless relics — has been preserved for posterity. The house is

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TAKEN FOR GRANTED—A scene such as this attracts little attention for the natives here in our coast country, but its simplicity and tranquility holds appeal for the outsider who envies us our rivers and creeks. Almost anywhere you look,

along the streams that abound here, you'll discover a picturesque setting. Arm yourself with a camera, when you venture forth on the Neuse and Trent.—Photo by Billy Benners.



AWAY FROM IT ALL—The cares of a troubled world seem far removed when you commune with Dame Nature in the Land of Enchanting Waters. If you're fed up with omnious headlines and disconcerting broadcasts, and downright

jittery over the trials and tribulations plaguing mankind, You can rekindle your faith and reinforce your courage in a boat on a lazy river.—Photo by Billy Benners.