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According to the manager of one of New Bern's leading supermarkets, five out of six housewives purchase margarine instead of butter. For our part, we consider butter a foolish luxury that we can do without and never miss.

For years, through its high salaried Washington lobbyists, the dairy industry spent a fortune to keep margarine from gracing America's dining rooms and breakfast nooks. They, and the spineless Federal officials who yielded to their influence, were the reason you were forced to mix coloring into your margarine for so many years.

Butter producers were cognizant of the fact that some housewives wouldn't go to this extra trouble, and besides margarine looked less appetizing before artificial coloring was added. The dairy industry contended that margarine manufacturers shouldn't be permitted to "yellow" their product. Seeing as how the butter producers weren't above the use of artificial coloring to glamorize butter, justice prevailed at long last.

Today's supermarket is a far cry from the grocery stores of yesteryear. Packaging of just about everything revolutionized the business, and deprived customers of the happy privilege they once had of sampling cookies, crackers, cheese and other tasty items, such as dried peaches and dried apples. Open barrels and boxes made eating a little of this or that for free as easy as rolling off a log.

You're no longer young if you can recall the grocer jamming an Irish potato on the spout of your kerosene can to keep the contents from spilling, and likewise if you remember the pleasing aroma of drippings from a molasses barrel. In the good old days, before wrapping and packing was done in advance, you could sniff what you were considering buying instead of just looking at it under glass, or reading directions on a sealed package.

Not only was this a distinct advantage for discerning customers but a perpetual picnic for the ever present flies. Grocery stores had their share of mice too, distributing souvenirs, but this particular problem was minimized by the alertness of a cat that dozed by the big-belly stove all day and hunted its prey all night.

Surprisingly, the price of fruit has changed very little in the last half century. When this editor was a small boy--hanging around the store run by his father--oranges, bananas and apples sold for a nickel apiece. Other items have increased several times in price, as if you didn't know, but not fruit.

A kid could hear some mighty wondrous stories in an old-time grocery store. Farmers, on their Saturday trip to town, would spin tall tales and indulge in rural philosophy while standing around eating their noon snack. It was always the same--a dime's worth of cheese or a nickel can of sardines, a bottle of pop, and soda crackers.

Shopping was as easy going and relaxed as yawning in the sun on a creek bank. Gummed tape was unheard of--every-

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NATURE'S HANDIWORK—It's a world of peace on the winding Trent these days. Shadows and sunshine, and trees festooned with Spanish moss, enhance the tranquility of a scene far removed from strife and hatred

and woe. Mortals rush like mad, but not the Trent. It journeys gently to New Bern for a rendezvous with the Neuse, and there joined as one they continue to the sea.—Photo by John R. Baxter, Jr.



SPRING SERENITY—"I'll yearn not for the rolling plain, or mountains to the sky, as long as I can know the joy of rivers flowing by." New Bernians are fortunate

to have scenes such as this at their very doorstep, here in the Land of Enchanting Waters. John R. Baxter, Jr., caught this view for a Mirror mural.