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Whether they be young or old, short or tall, large or small, all of the New Bern mothers we'll be honoring Sunday have at least one thing in common.

Each of them, at one time or another, has turned to another mother—Mother Goose—to provide delightful entertainment for the heavenly bundles delivered to them by the Stork.

Much of the advice a mother gives her offspring may be forgotten or disregarded in later years, but we oldsters seldom forget the rhythmic phrases of our early nursery rhymes.

There have been poets far superior to Mother Goose, and yet it is doubtful that all of them put together have achieved the lasting fame that still clings to her name.

Who was Mother Goose anyhow? Don't feel ignorant if you can't answer the question, since no one else can answer it either.

Perhaps you've heard she was a Boston widow named Elizabeth Goose, who made up the little ditties and sang them to her grandson. Grandmothers being the affectionate souls they are, the story sounds plausible.

According to the oft repeated version of how Mother Goose came into being, the father of the grandson referred to happened to be a printer.

Impressed by the rhymes, he supposedly published them in Boston in 1719, just nine years after New Bern was founded by the Swiss.

It's a good story, except for the fact that it's just as fictional as our Mother Goose characters that have stood the test of time.

Not so much as one copy of the book has been found, although a great deal of research has been done in an effort to bring it to light.

This in itself is not conclusive. But even if we assume that there was such a book in existence, the story of Boston's Mother Goose falls through.

Long before then the same intriguing name was used in connection with folklore in France.

Back in 1679 a French master of fantasy, named Charles Perrault, published a volume of fairy stories titled "Tales of Passed Times, by Mother Goose.

One of the stories—called "The Master Cat"—is the same yarn we know here in America as "Puss in Boots".

Another is one of the great favorites with New Bern children of every generation—"Sleeping Beauty". No doubt you loved it as a child.

However, before these stories found their way to England, that staid old country had its own rhymes and jingles.

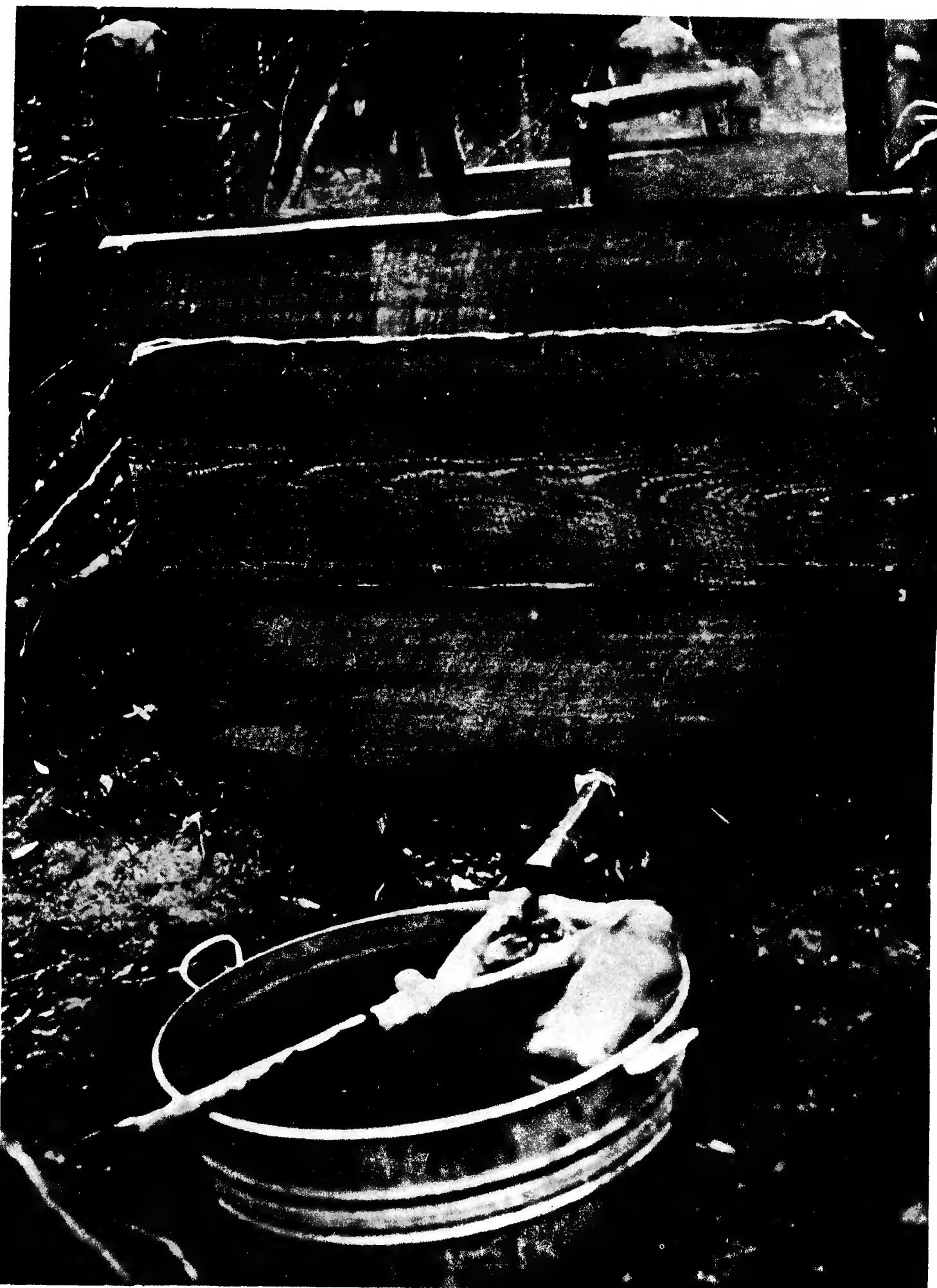
They were handed down through the years. When and where they began is lost in the annals of the past.

In the year 1760, a publisher in London by the name of John Newberry lifted "Mother Goose" as a signature from the aforementioned French fairy tales.

He transferred the by line to the nursery jingles that have since borne the name of this mythical authoress.

To give you an idea of how old the Mother Goose rhymes are, it is true the "three blind mice" are mentioned in a poem

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FINISHED PRODUCT—Where else but in The Mirror would you find a photograph of a Craven county still in full operation? The still itself can be seen in the background. What you see in the foreground is a cooling vat, to reduce the potent vapor to liquid, and a galvanized tub to catch the stuff as it comes out of a pipe at the bottom of the vat. There's a rag beneath

the pipe to serve as a strainer, tied to a forked branch. In the tub is one of the Mason jars used to bottle the joy juice for northern markets. If a steady diet of white lightning won't exterminate a Yankee, it's no wonder we lost the War Between The States. Even so, a couple of swigs will make any Brooklyn boozier lisp with a Southern drawl, and holler for collards.