

Through
THE
Looking
Glass

The NEW BERN MIRROR

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Old timers who mourn the passing of things that were dear to earlier generations should never overlook the boarding houses we used to have in New Bern.

Scattered around town were these pleasantly informal eating places, where quality and quantity blended into means that took no account of calories. You stuffed to heart's content, and shared the latest gossip with every bite you ate.

No one ever knew in advance what was to be served on any given day, but nobody cared. There was bound to be a wide variety, and those who had arms long enough to qualify for the famed "boarding house reach" got plenty of it all.

In many respects a boarding house was just like a family gathering. Table manners didn't worry the regulars, and second helpings were the order of the day. There was good natured banter over the good consumption of this or that diner, but it was like the pot calling the kettle black. Every body was a hog over the vittles, except the temporarily ailing who were "off their feed" for the time being.

Invariably, the energetic lady who operated the boarding house was a cheerful and loquacious soul. She loved people, and darted in and out of the kitchen to exchange conversation with the folks who entrusted their digestions to her care.

Perhaps memory is playing tricks on us, but for the life of us we can't remember anybody at the long, bountifully-laden table ever getting sure enough mad during the hectic discussions that accompanied the meals. It's hard to become successfully infuriated, when you're cramming food like a late arrival at a church picnic.

Surprisingly, you didn't hear much about stomach ulcers either. Maybe the unhappy mortals who were plagued by ulcers simply stayed away from boarding houses—or should have stayed away earlier. At any rate, it was quite clear that no one among those present was suffering at the moment from the inadequacies and disturbances of a squeamish stomach.

Today, at noon, most of us describe our meal as lunch, but it was always called dinner in the old days. To call this enormous intake of food a lunch would have been a disgraceful misrepresentation of the facts.

First come, first served was the pattern, and the boarders who got a head start were privileged to latch into the best pieces of meat on the platter. Actually, this was their only advantage, since the avalanche of assorted vegetables that rounded out the feast was never depleted. Much remained after the last of the thundering heard had departed.

Eating first, and leaving, wasn't entirely advisable. You knew full well that the moment you were gone you would become the topic of conversation. Your faults and falling were paraded out for caustic criticism, and an untruth or twogot added occasionally to liven up the gossip.

What the boarding house crowd didn't know about what
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WELL DESIGNED—Pretty and practical is as good a way as any to describe the new home of First Federal Savings and Loan Association at 513 Pollock Street. Basically Georgian in its architectural concept, the structure adds to rather than subtracts from New

Bern's image as a town of lovely landmarks. Every effort was made to blend convenience with charm. A visit will convince you that the goal was notably achieved. Photo by Wray Studio.



MOTORISTS TOO—Customers of First Federal Savings and Loan Association will appreciate its drive-in facilities as seen here. Venture through the door, and you quickly find yourself in the midst of furnishings that will delight those who love fine things harking

back to Colonial days. So emphatic is the effect, one almost wonders if the ancient clock in the far corner has in truth turned backward in time.—Photo by Wray Studio.