



The NEW BERN MIRROR

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It's time once more to issue our annual plea for safe driving and walking during the Christmas holidays.

Already this year, over thirteen hundred persons have met violent death on North Carolina's streets and highways. Last year alone, 304 pedestrians were killed in our reckless slaughter of young and old.

Yuletide shoppers, armed with bundles and concentrating on their gift lists can be an easy prey for motorists who show little regard for the rights of pedestrians.

New Bern has quite a few danger spots, but none more hazardous than the dangerous situation at Broad and Middle streets. Only a miracle has prevented fatalities there. God help the elderly (and the spry) who are cheated out of their legal right to cross by motorists.

During the holidays at least, City Hall can do worse than place a policeman at this intersection to protect thousands of pedestrians who will take their life in their hands when they attempt to cross without being run over.

Speaking of policemen, it should be no secret to anyone that the New Bern police department needs a thorough overhauling, and the earliest possible appointment of a permanent Chief who has the know how and gumption to strengthen morale, and build a force that will be accorded community respect.

Whether Preston H. Robinson should have been relieved of his duties as Chief of Police is a matter that has been argued loud and long. It should be obvious, however, to feuding alderman and everybody else that there ought not to be any dragging of feet in getting a good replacement.

It so happens that we had a lot of respect for Robinson and the man he succeeded, Jim Pearsall. Frankly, anyone who succeeded Pearsall was, in our opinion, a marked man. Robinson, we felt at the time, made a mistake when he accepted the job. Subsequent events did nothing to alter this opinion.

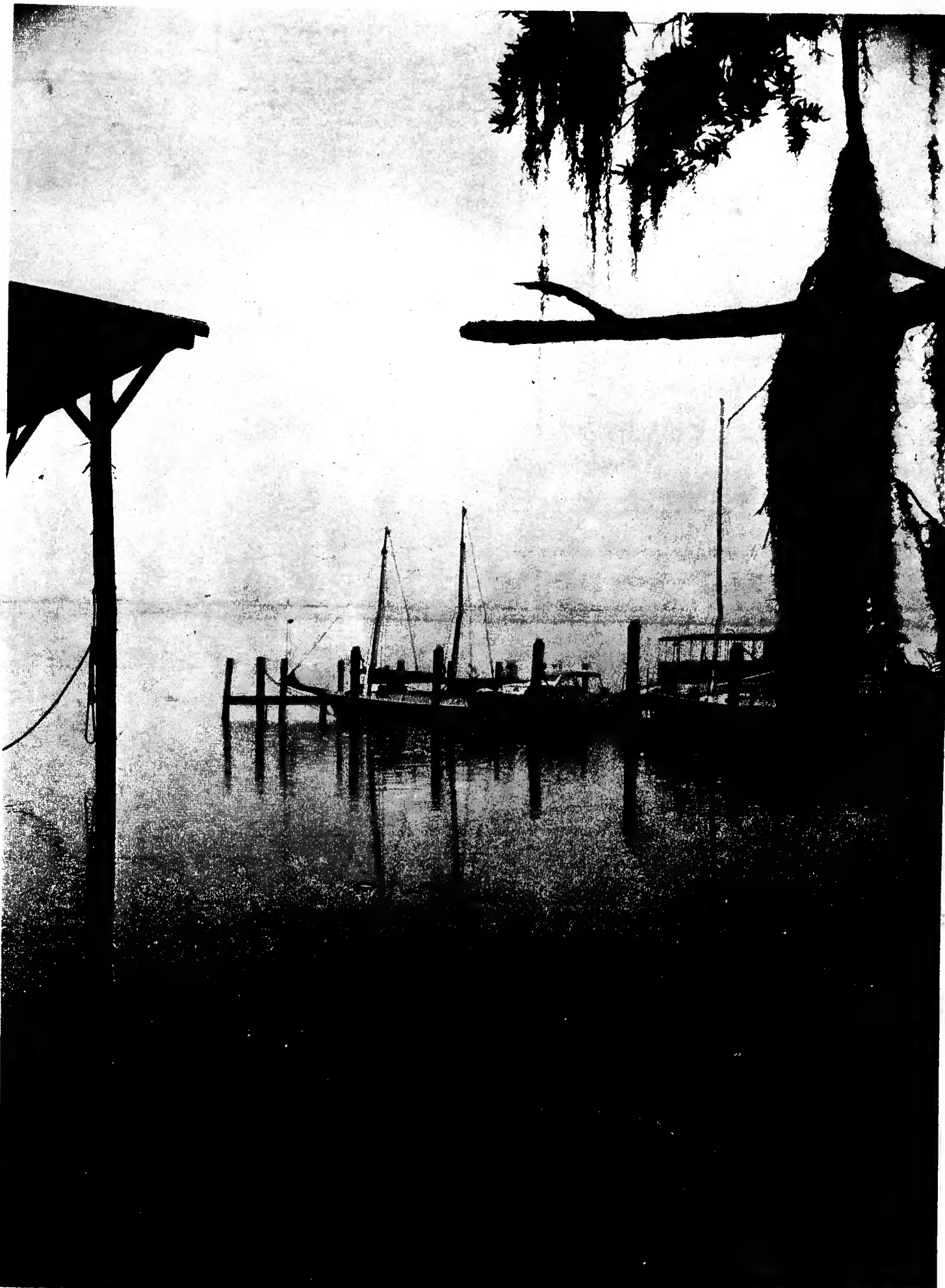
As for the five aldermen now arrayed against each other as mortal enemies, it so happens that we're on friendly terms with all of them. Two of them, on opposite sides of the fence, are Mirror advertisers, so we can hardly be accused of having an axe to grind in the matter.

New Bern, like every town, needs a police department that merits respect, and if possible outright admiration. Being a good policeman isn't the easiest job in the world, and a community suffers when it can't point to its law enforcement officers with pride.

Whatever else might be said against them, local police to the best of our knowledge have rarely if ever been guilty of brutality. We'll go further and say that most charges of police brutality in other sections of the nation have been unwarranted or exaggerated.

Of the 1,700 complaints of police brutality referred to the Federal Bureau of Investigation between mid-1964 and mid-1965, only 47 cases were referred to Federal grand juries.

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YEAR'S END—Autumn's glory has all but faded from the sight of man, here in our beloved coast country. Along somber streams where boats ride at anchor in the enveloping mist, late November's chill winds snatch the last withered foliage from trees once proud and green. Only Spanish moss remains suspended from branches now bare. It does little to dispel the season's forlorn mood. And yet Nature's requiem for beauty that could not remain with us

always does not close the tomb forever. Beyond the wintry blasts that lie ahead another April waits to bring forth its earliest flowers, and as surely as there's a God in heaven, birds will sing their songs again. And, under the sun's warming caress, our rivers and creeks will beckon to those who find joy, and peace of mind and heart, along rippling waters seeking the sea.—Photo by Billy Benners.