

# MIRROR

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One of the nicest of many nice things about Christmas, here in New Bern and around the world, is the part that music plays in its observance.

Since that first Holy Night, when angels sang above a Bethlehem stable, the Christ Child's birthday has been an occasion for carols. Without the blessing of song, the Yuletide would lose much of its incomparable appeal for mankind.

Surely, God intended it this way. Aptly termed the universal language, music lifts us closer to the heights of heaven than anything else on the face of the earth.

Carols are as ageless as the Christmas spirit, as perpetually charming as the happy face of a kid in the passing throng. New songs have their brief melodic moment and vanish into oblivion, but the old songs remain, unblemished by time.

"Silent Night" and "Away In A Manager" are as beautifully fragile as a butterfly's wing, but they have the durability of reinforced concrete. Neither wars nor rumors of wars remove them from the scene.

We can't visualize a more stupendous task, or an undertaking more definitely doomed to failure, than the effort of any contemporary composer to write a carol that will supplant "Hark The Herald Angles Sing" or "It Came Upon The Midnight Clear."

Such permanence is something of an oddity in a world where mortals in their restlessness are ever anxious to switch to the new, whatever it may be.

Come to think of it, everything about Christmas remains pretty much the same. Who would want it otherwise?

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Hearing Liberace play "Rhapsody In Blue" on last Saturday's Jackie Gleason Show brought back memories of Paul Whiteman, the King of Jazz. George Gershwin wrote the composition while he was pianist for the great Whiteman band, and from that day on the paunchy, moon-faced maestro featured it whenever he filled a dance engagement or gave a concert.

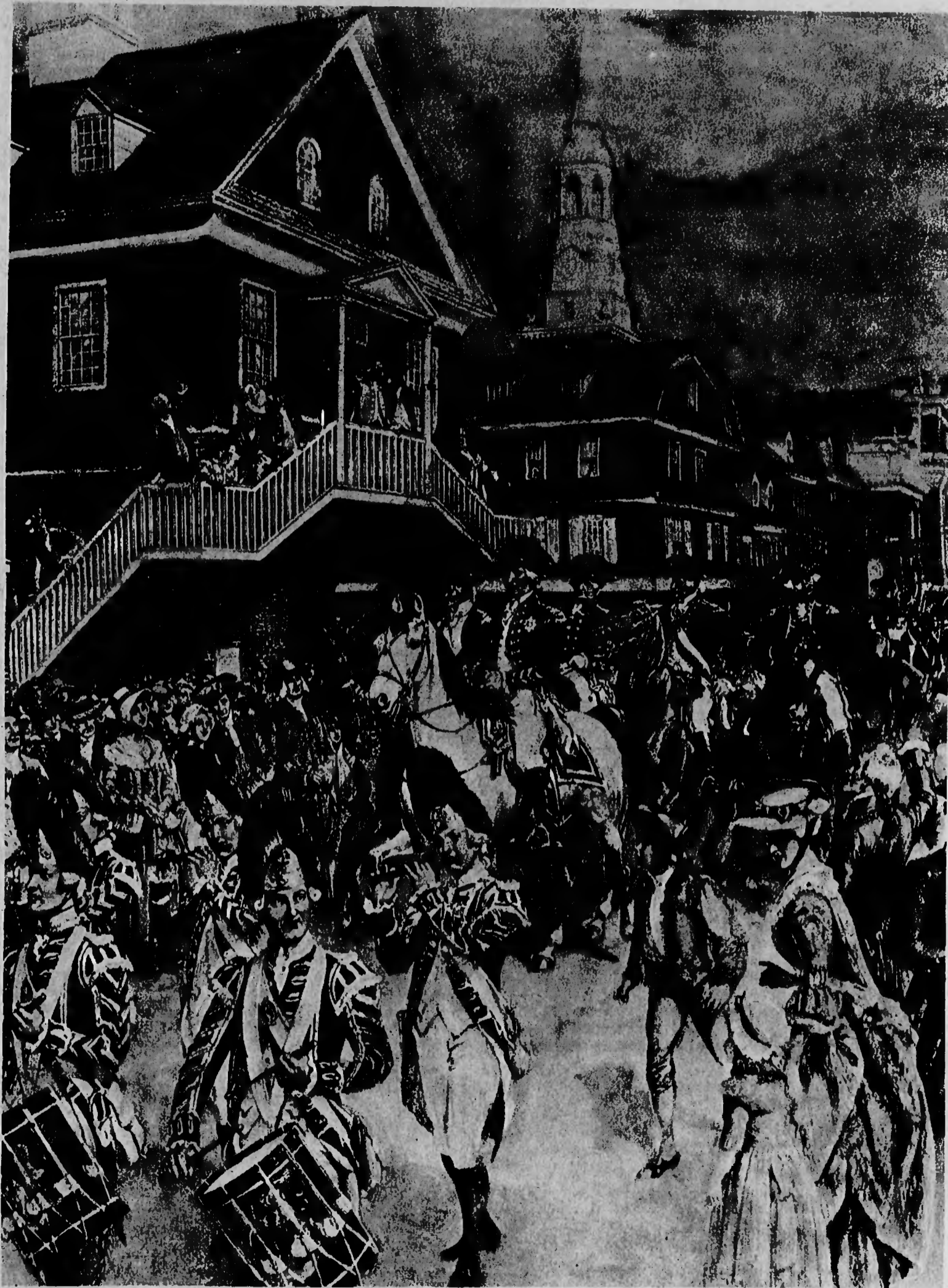
Whiteman played Morehead City's Atlantic Beach on one occasion in the old days, as did several other name bands. That was before the Pagoda burned, and the coastal resort became, apparently forever, a place of poor dancing facilities and mediocre music.

Cab Calloway, currently starring with Pearl Bailey in Hello Dolly, brought his famed Cotton Club orchestra to the Carteret vacation spot too, and went all out to give New Bernians and other eastern North Carolinians attending his dance their money's worth.

That's considerably more than one could say for Ben Bernie, also nationally popular, who was booked into the Atlantic Hotel, years before it went up in flames, like the Pagoda over at the beach.

Bernie, sloppily dressed in badly wrinkled clothes, appeared only briefly on the bandstand with "all the lads." The rest of the night he sipped brew outside the hotel, while a fiddle

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**OUR HERITAGE**—This painting, courtesy of the Ogden Collection of the New York Historical Society, is one of over 50 works of art which appear in "Freedom's Finest Hour" Friday night at 7:30 p.m. on New Bern's WNBE-TV, Channel 12. Here, undaunted citizens of a budding America jeer at British redcoats occupying one of their towns during the Revolutionary War. The award-winning documentary, in color, utilizes paintings, etchings and documents of the per-

iod to depict the people and events of the Revolution. Many, from private collections, are available for viewing by the general public for the first time. Winner of coveted awards from the Council on International Nontheatrical Events in Washington, D. C., and the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, Pa., the film will undoubtedly rank high on the roster of all-time television presentations. When you see it Friday night, you'll be prouder than ever of your birthright.