

# MIRROR

PUBLISHED WEEKLY  
IN THE HEART OF  
SOUTHERN NORTH  
CAROLINA

NB-Craven Library  
400 Johnson St.  
New Bern, NC 28560

VOLUME 11

NEW BERN, N. C., FRIDAY, JULY 5, 1968

NUMBER 15



You've been in town a spell if hot weather brings to mind those old-time Sunday school picnics we used to have. Cruising down the river on the Steamer Phillips was an adventure, as was a train ride to Morehead City, and the boat trip from there to Atlantic Beach.

Convenience is wonderful, and we're all for it, but much of the glamor of heading for the ocean evaporated when a causeway and bridge were built almost to the surf. Like the toys that kids once got only at Christmas, visiting the beach became a routine thing.

Nothing could beat a Sunday school picnic for revealing a person's true self. Sad to relate, some of the good sisters and brethren who sang and prayed the loudest in church behaved in the manner of hungry swine when they swarmed to the table and grabbed the best pieces of fried chicken.

As a small boy we discovered that, when eating time comes, Christians often react to the presence of food just like infidels do. What kept us from losing faith was an awareness that those who brought far more than their share of lunch weren't numbered among the greedy grabbers. They were not only free hearted but downright civilized.

It's much too late now to thank a handful of loyal brethren who passed up the joy of splashing in the ocean to make barrels of lemonade for the multitude assembled. We suspect that ingredients went into the barrel by impulse rather than by recipe, but never since has lemonade been so tasty and refreshing.

Not the least of the revelations at such picnics was the sight of some of the good sisters and brethren in attire rented from the bath house. At best, beach wear in those days did little for the human form, but the rented swimming equipment would have made Miss America a monstrosity. A deacon with his underpinions and midsection uncovered was the strongest argument against nudity anyone needed.

You'll still find Sunday school picnics and reunions in rural sections, but city churches with large congregations have steered away from arranging these outdoor gatherings. In fact, plenty of New Bernians grown and married have no idea of what an honest to goodness church picnic is like.

During the waning years, one of the biggest thrills ended, the special train to and from Morehead City, enabling everybody to ride together and pause at Newport to gather a flower or two at a lily pond flanking the track. There was laughter and song, and coming back radiantly sunburned you felt like you had been somewhere.

When buses replaced the trains, the atmosphere of togetherness diminished, and finally, making the trip by private automobile struck the fatal blow. There's so much more to do and see nowadays, at a much faster pace. Even so, any older will agree that something pleasant went out of existence when the Sunday school picnic vanished from our scene.

Equally enthralling, and just

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**A LIVING DOLL**—Yes that's what Delores Hovey is, and a smiling doll who almost never cries. The youngest of three daughters who have blessed the home of Gordon and Fumiko Hovey at Battleground Park just east of New Bern, she will celebrate her second birthday on September 30. She will have a cake with a pair of candles on it, but the day won't be complete for her if there isn't a big bowl of fruit on the table.

Most of all she likes grapes and bananas. From birth she has responded to music, and she learned to walk early for the sole purpose of dancing, which she does perpetually. She creates her own interpretations, and they are something to see. Gordon met Fumiko while serving with the Marines in Japan, and the romance that blossomed was a lasting one.—Photo by Eunice Wray.