

The NEW BERN

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New Bernians who knew Mary Louise Waters, and thousands of them did, either liked her for her frankness and the courage of her convictions, or found the strongly opinionated spinster thoroughly obnoxious.

There was no middle ground, and she made no attempt to establish one. She felt intense loyalty for her friends, and exhibited equally vigorous animosity for those she considered her enemies.

Discussed as much as Tryon Palace, at least by natives, was the wall she erected between her home and a neighbor's. In front of her own house, Mary Louise placed a very large anchor, which this editor interpreted to mean that she was going to stay right there until the breath left her.

As best we can understand it, one of the peevish she had against the neighbor referred to was the neighbor's dog. We got the feeling that Mary Louise didn't care for canines, even a little bit, but she upset this theory by eventually acquiring a rather small dog herself.

When she took the pet out for a walk, she always had him on a leash, if indeed you can call a rope of considerable length a leash. We don't know exactly how long the rope was, but reeling the little dog in was something closely resembling bringing down a kite, or landing a king mackerel in the Gulf Stream.

Whatever the issue, you always knew where Mary Louise stood. Unfortunately, it was a foregone conclusion that under no circumstance could there be a meeting of minds if your opinion differed. No meeting of minds, that is, short of complete surrender on your part.

Far be it from us to criticize her for her strong convictions, and her willingness to express them. Much of what is wrong with America today stems from the fact that a great many people don't have the gumption to publicly take a stand for the things they believe in.

Whether it be in business, in church, or in social circles, the average American prefers to play it safe and go along with the tide. The result of course is that the few dominate the many, and often unjustly. If you need convincing, simply look around you.

As might be expected, Mary Louise was a nightly caller when a local radio station, WHIT, had its ill advised "Open Mike" program on the air. We term it ill advised because callers were permitted to remain anonymous, and no one has a right to remain unidentified while making a public outcry.

We say this despite the fact that from time to time various callers had good things to dwell on regarding The Mirror, which brings us around to an incident so typical of Mary Louise that we know you will appreciate it.

In her case there was no mistaking the voice when she called "Open Mike" and said, "I have just finished reading J. Gaskill McDaniel's editorial in the New Bern Mirror, and I think everybody ought to read it. I don't always see eye to eye with him on what he writes, but this time I see eye to eye with him



STILL REMEMBERED — More than 30 years have passed since Kirby Higbe pitched for New Bern's Coastal Plain League Bears, but the colorful, strange acting righthander remains a legend that isn't apt to die. Well nigh invincible on the mound, he was a clown at heart, and as impish as they come. Arrested for driving on the sidewalk in the town's business section, he said he did it to dodge a woman motorist,

and was let off. Graduating to the majors, he won 20 games for the last place Phillies, and Brooklyn parted with three players and \$100,000 to land him. Among his friends in private life was a gentleman of anything but limited intellect, Ernest Hemingway. Only the two knew what they had in common. Maybe Hemingway toyed with the idea of writing a novel about Kirby, but figured it would be utterly unbelievable.

