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It's time to stop counting birthdays, if you remember when Swarthmore Chataugua pitched its tent for a week each summer on Central School's Academy Green, and brought culture to our community.

Less edifying but well attended was Smokey Joe's medicine show, staged on a platform that, believe or not, was erected right smack in the center of Middle Street's first block.

How permission to use this vantage point was obtained at City Hall is a mystery buried with the politicians who allowed it. Anyhow, it happened and hundreds of New Bernians bought bottles of an amazing tonic that was not only guaranteed to cure you of what you knew you had, but ailments you weren't aware of having until the medicine convinced you.

Those were the days when our fair city on the shores of the Neuse and Trent was a paradise for pitch men. Slickest of the lot was a fellow who backed his roadster to the curb, along about where the Branch Bank is now located, and went to work.

He started out by offering to sell a genuine \$20 bill for \$10. Then he sold the ten for a five spot, the five spot for a dollar, the dollar for a half, the half for a quarter, the quarter for a dime, the dime for a nickle, and the nickle for a penny. After that, with a gesture of utter disdain for money, he tossed the penny into the crowd that had quickly gathered.

Folks came running from all directions, including some of the town's leading merchants. The lure of something for nothing had worked its magic. All of a sudden it developed that this charitable gentleman wasn't here just for the purpose of giving away money.

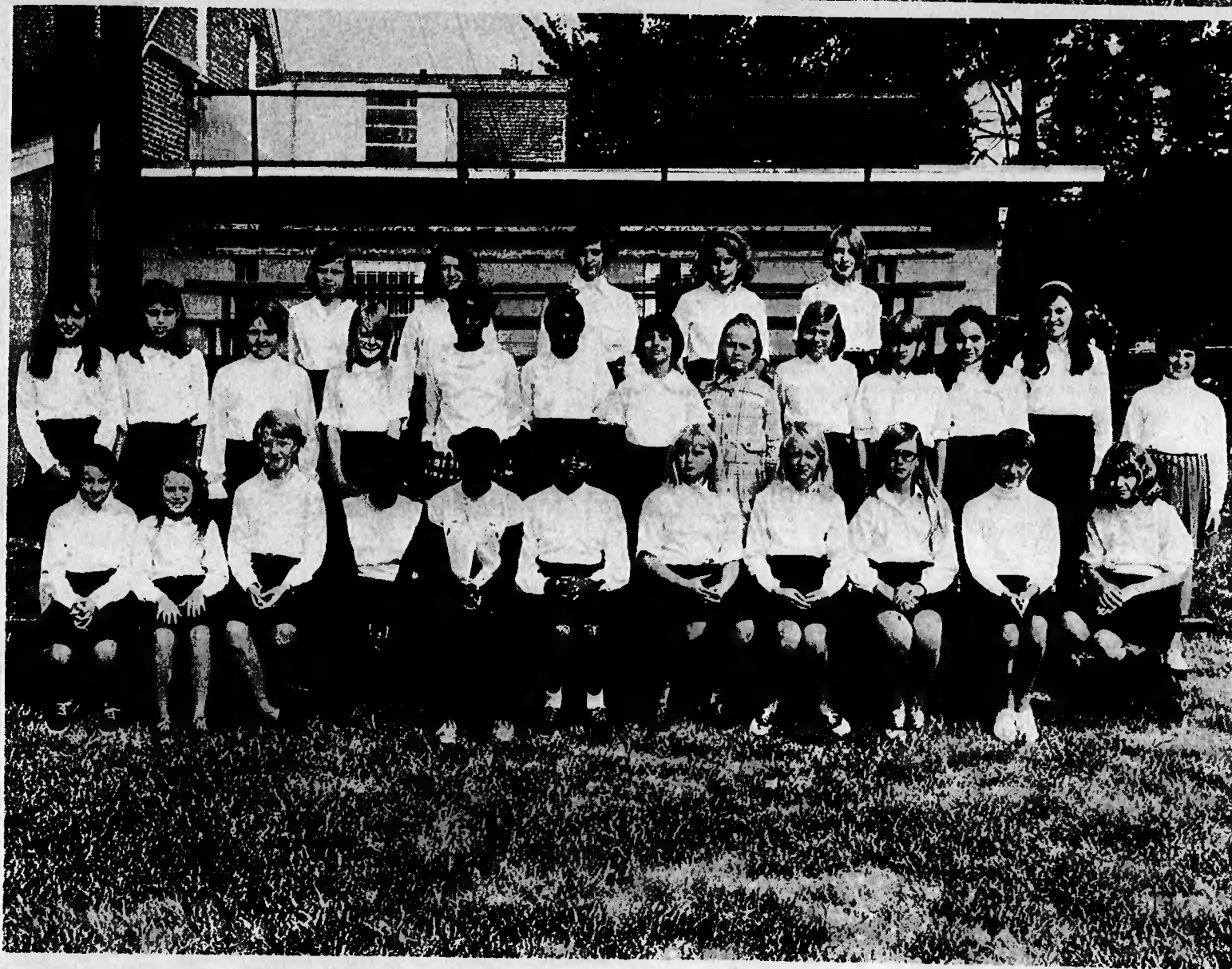
As long as he was in town, he thought it was only right to give citizens an opportunity to buy some wonderful gold watches at an absolute bargain. These shining timepieces, big as a country biscuit and dazzling in the early afternoon sun, were not ordinary watches like the Hamiltons, Elgins, Walthams and Gruens that New Bern's two jewelers, J. O. Baxter and Sam Eaton, displayed in their windows.

No indeed. You could tell there was a lot more gold in them, they would run a month without winding, and were guaranteed to last forever. Besides the price was cheap because New Bern was the town where the manufacturer had decided to make this introductory offer.

Twenty dollar bills came out of pockets all over the place, including a number of pockets that bystanders never dreamed were lined to that extent. For a while it looked like the demand for watches would exceed the supply, but the salesman managed to take care of all prospective purchasers.

The thing ended as suddenly as it had begun. The pitch man had a partner, in readiness at the steering wheel of his roadster, and with last transaction completed, the pair departed at a speed that would have done credit to later space launchings at Cape Kennedy.

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THEY SOUND OFF — New York City's Times Square on New Year's Eve is no noisier than these young cheerleaders, when they yell for their gridiron heroes in the New Bern Recreation Department's rip snorting Midget League. On the sidelines they work as hard as the teams on the field, and are just as dedicated to the cause. Pictured in the lighter colored

skirts is the group that whoops it up for the Rams, and in the darker skirts is the holler brigade that keeps the Colts on their toes. Being a cheerleader not only requires a good pair of lungs, but hours of practice. It's loads of fun though, and absolutely heavenly when your ball club wins.—Photos by Chick Natella.