



The NEW BERN

MIRROR

PUBLISHED WEEKLY
IN THE HEART OF
NORTH CAROLINA
Regional Library
400 Johnson St.
New Bern, NC 28560

VOLUME 12

NEW BERN, N. C., FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1970

NUMBER 48



New Bern-Craven County Public Library

It has been said that the Baptists may not sing well, but at least sing loud. Actually, they quite often produce quality to go along with the quantity, when they loosen up their vocal chords.

Pass a church in any town, from the mountains to the sea, and you can tell by the congregational singing whether it's a bunch of Baptists doing right by an old familiar hymn, or some other denomination giving forth with considerably less fervor.

Even so, we haven't encountered any members of the flock in this generation who are as exceptionally audible as was the late "Blind" Johnson. Things have never been quite the same at New Bern's First Baptist church since he disappeared from the pews to join heaven's choir.

Johnson never saw a song book, from the cradle to the grave, and didn't need to. He knew every hymn by heart. With his head cocked to one side, like a hungry robin in early spring, he proclaimed his great faith through the medium of melody. No matter how much gusto the other worshipers percolated, his voice unintentionally dominated.

Destined to walk through darkness all his born days, he brightened the pathway for those who could see, with the sunshine of his smile. It was a friendly and fearless smile, worn by a man who not only loved fellow mortals, but had faith in their goodness.

We have no quarrel with those who proudly point to the First Baptist church as a sanctuary where President Harry S. Truman once communed with God on a Sabbath morning. Not as long as we can pause passing by, and say, "This is where Blind Johnson sang his praise to the Good Lord above."

A sample Mirror survey reveals that New Bernians overwhelmingly prefer the rose as their favorite flower. This should surprise no one. A similar poll, the world over, would produce the same result.

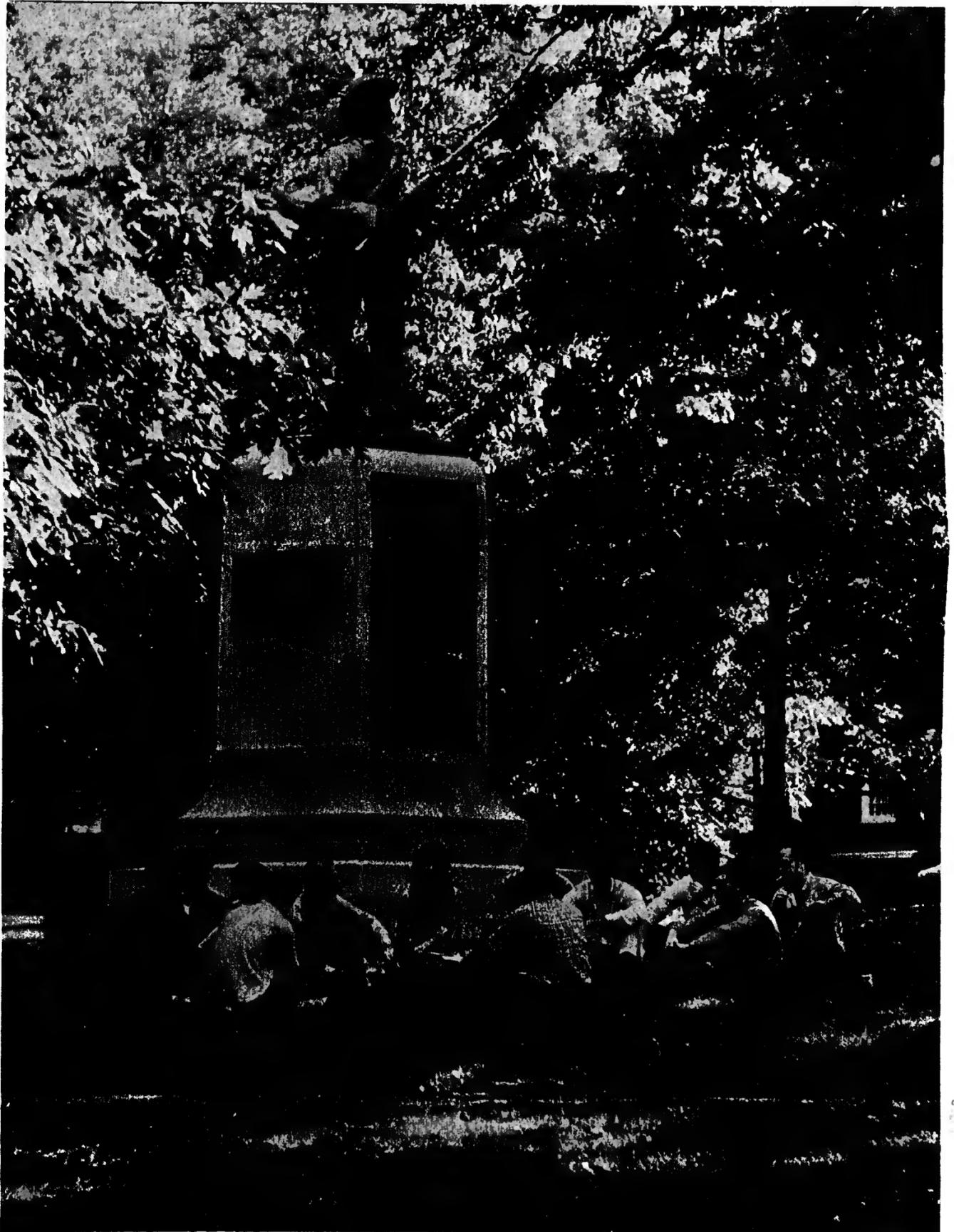
However, even our Buds and Blossoms columnist, well informed Mamie Miller, can hardly be expected to identify all 16,000 varieties. And perhaps she doesn't know that in every land except Holland it's name is essentially the same, rose or rosa. The Dutch call it the "roos."

When Cleopatra baited her trap for Marc Antony, she had her slaves carpet the floor of the palace with roses. He practically swooned at the sight, and asked the stunning queen to make sure that a blanket of roses would be placed upon his tomb.

Which is why local florists, and flower shops everywhere, owe Marc a debt of gratitude. In death, as in life, he wanted to be associated with beautiful blossoms, and more than anyone else he sold fellow mortals on the use of flowers in connection with funerals.

Credit for popularizing roses doesn't go to Cleopatra, but another gal of boudoir fame, Napoleon's Empress Josephine. She cultivated 250 varieties in her garden, and produced

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WELL CHAPERONED — Students enjoying recent warm days at the University of North Carolina don't mind having Silent Sam around. That's the affectionate name they've given the Confederate monument on what many consider to be the prettiest college campus in America. Chapel Hill is lovely at any time of the year, but never more charming than in spring. Trees that have stood the rigors of still another win-

ter array themselves in new foliage, to shelter shaded walks where early flowers lift their heads to the friendly sun. This was Tom Wolfe's Carolina, no less cherished by those who came before him, and those who have since spent memorable moments there. A student from New Bern said it all when he admitted, "I'd like to stay here forever."

