

The NEW BERN

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Yesterday was when every New Bern kid knew that spring would bring bluebirds to town. When was the last time you saw one of these feathered symbols of happiness?

You won't find them in the state of New York either, but its legislature recently chose the species to be the state bird. This despite the wistful complaint of a solon who asked, "How are we going to go along with a bird we never saw?"

Yesterday was when Protestant churches in our fair city frowned at the suggestion that a robed choir would be nice. Everybody except the folks at Christ Episcopal, who already had one.

The feeling in some quarters was that putting robes on a Protestant choir would make them look like Catholics. Objecting the least were those sopranos and altos who couldn't afford frequent changes of Sabbath finery. Almost without exception, they had the best voices.

We like to think that New Bern's Protestants, and Catholics and Jews too, have mellowed somewhat in their thinking. It isn't the trimmings, or a set ritual, that makes religion count for something. Even bending your knees in prayer is pointless, if you don't kneel in your heart.

Yesterday was when two Norfolk, Va., daily newspapers, the Ledger - Dispatch and the Virginian Pilot, had quite a few subscribers here. Copies came in on the train, where route boys picked them up and tossed them shortly thereafter on porches all over town.

Yes, it's true what they say about Dixie. A coast to coast survey conducted by an enterprising reporter for Social Science Information reveals that people in the South smile more than other Americans, and those in coastal sections smile most of all.

Northern liberals who delight in bad mouthing the region below the Mason-Dixon line as a place populated by the country's meanest humans won't like the results of the survey. Any fool knows that friendly smiles and downright meanness seldom go together.

The reporter arrived at his conclusions by traveling thousands of miles, and taking actual smile counts on various Main streets. New Yorkers, he discovered, smile less than anyone else, and speaking as a small townner we are inclined to believe they have little reason to smile.

New Englanders, the survey indicated, don't do a lot of smiling either. Not nearly as much, for example, as middle-class people in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. The smile counter found plenty of beaming faces in Atlanta, Louisville, Memphis, and Nashville.

We've never been to Nashville, but the folks who hail from there do seem to be above the average when it comes to good naturedness. Maybe the prevalence of country music is a contributing factor, and the prevalence of guitar pickers driving around in Cadillacs.

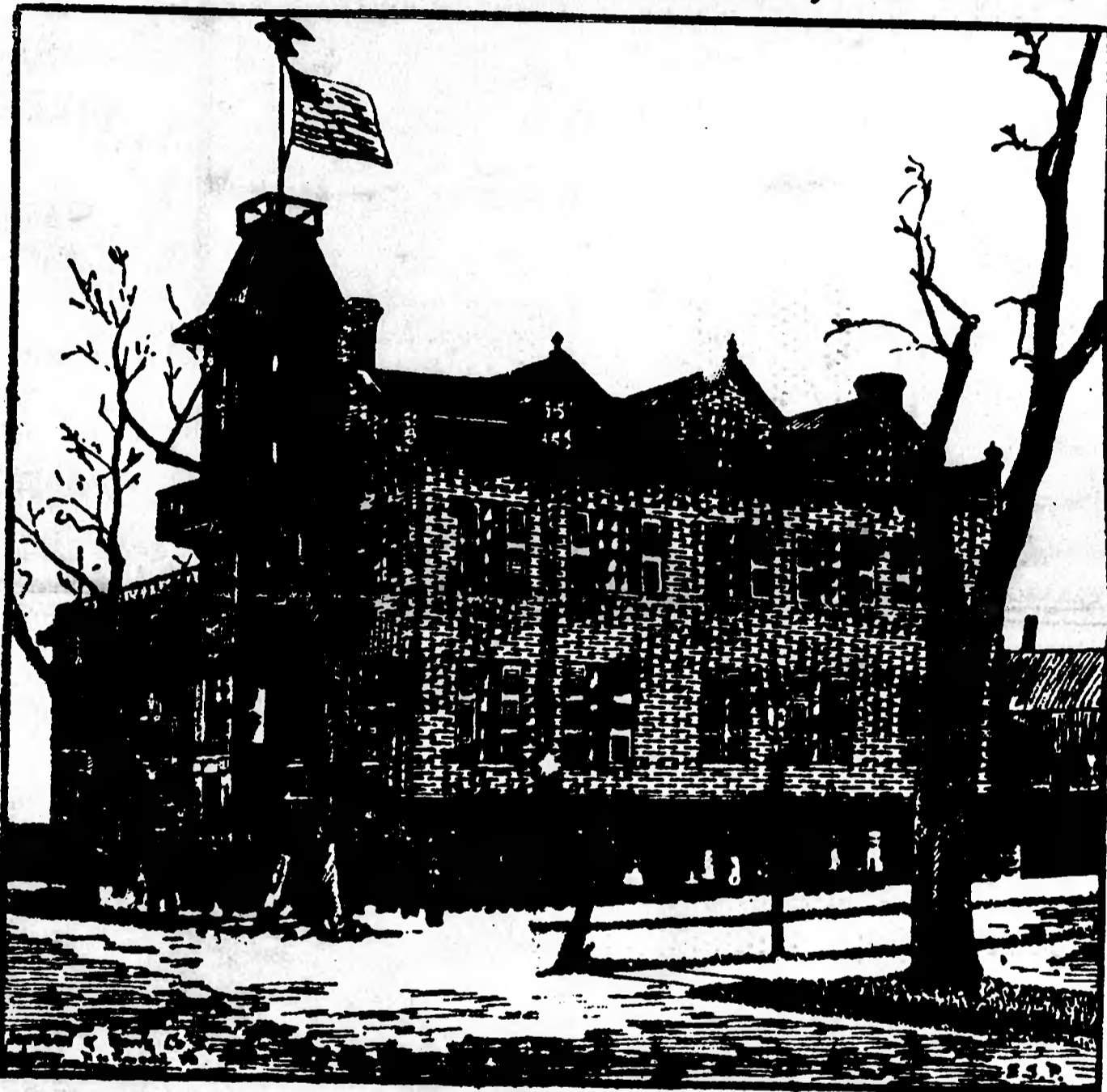
Smiling has been described scientifically as "an automatic neuromuscular reaction to an underlying and pleasurable en-

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W. R. SKINNER, PRINCIPAL.

As dim as this faded circular are the memories of a local institution long since gone. New Bern parents of today, struggling to give their offspring an

education, will find it hard to visualize tuition, board, washing and lights as low as \$55 for a five month session.