

The NEW BERN

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Yesterday was when Frank Mozley Stevens found joy east of New Bern, hunting at Camp Bryan with our town's pioneer music man, George Fuller. Stevens, a millionaire, made his bundle from the lowly hot-dog.

Expanding a concessions business founded by his father, Harry M. Stevens, he eventually grossed \$20 million annually from the franks he sold in major league ball parks and at 45 race tracks. He died a few years back, at 84.

Yesterday, along about 1959, was when the Rev. J. Murphy Smith, pastor of New Bern's First Presbyterian Church, had his sermon interrupted one Sunday morning by the family's cat, Topsy.

She strolled down the aisle, hopped upon a table where the offering had been placed, and seemed curious about the size of the collection. To that extent, she and her master probably had much in common.

If it had been Centenary Methodist, First Baptist, or some other downtown church, she could have made it to the pulpit. However, the pulpit at First Presbyterian is not only enclosed but elevated. You reach it from the rear, by going up some steps. Obviously, Topsy didn't know that.

New Bern, in the hushed darkness just before dawn, is a placid sight to behold. There's a gentleness and serenity about the old town at this ungodly hour that neither the morning sun, nor the moon and stars at eventide, can ever duplicate.

Small wonder that some of us like to rise early, not because work demands it, but for the sheer joy of greeting the oncoming day. Call us crazy for not sleeping two or three extra hours while we've got the chance, but don't make us stay in bed.

Unless you're a confirmed dawn buster, you simply have no idea how fresh and wonderful air can be. So far, pollution hasn't permeated our atmosphere to such an extent that the early hours are overly affected.

And in a world where noise and confusion usually reign, its downright uplifting to the soul to walk along deserted streets where you can have a little talk with God without outside interruption.

For one thing, New Bernians used to risking life and limb while crossing at Broad and Middle, might enjoy the novelty of strolling nonchalantly from one curb to another. The traffic just before dawn is no hazard.

A man can really take inventory of himself when, in the midst of familiar surroundings, he comes face to face with solitude. Nothing short of snow's concealing cloak transforms ugliness into charm like the mist of pre-dawn.

Memories stir early too. No matter how soon you take to the streets, you'll discover that your recollections are out there ahead of you, waiting to be gathered to your heart. It is the hour for remembrance.

One by one, you glimpse the forget-me-nots that bloom in retrospect on any thoroughfare you choose to wander. Houses

(Continued on page 8)



THIS COULD BE IT — Mortals never have reached full agreement on the time in life deserving of being called the golden age. Perhaps any age is golden if you choose to make it so. At any rate, lovely Lynette Hill, four year old daughter of the Jimmie Hills of New Bern, personifies childhood's finest hour in this

prize winning portrait by Florence E. Hanff of Wooten-Moulton Studio. Its excellence earned for Florence a first place award from the Western Guild of North Carolina Professional Photographers Association.

