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Yesterday was when a huge dirigible, the Los Angeles, came out of the western sky and passed over New Bern at 70 miles an hour. Late sleepers were getting their second nap, but the motors woke them up.

It was a German-built Zeppelin, originally christened the ZR-3, and made big news when it crossed the Atlantic from Friedrichshafen to Lakehurst on its maiden voyage in 81 hours and 17 minutes. The year was 1924.

Unlike other postwar dirigibles, American-built and foreign, the Los Angeles was destined to lead a charmed life devoid of tragedy. It continued to cruise serenely, at intervals, until it was retired in 1932.

Several dirigibles were considerably less fortunate. Soon after the Los Angeles cast its shadow on our town, another American monster of the airways, the Shenandoah, was broken in two by winds near Caldwell, Ohio, and 14 crew members perished.

That was only the beginning of disasters. Two more dirigibles, built in the United States like the Shenandoah, were destroyed in flight. The Akron went down off the New Jersey coast during a violent storm, and 73 of its 76 men perished. And the Macon fell into the ocean off California. Two men died.

Other countries had their tragedies too, most of them earlier than ours. Germany's Hindenberg was an exception. Largest of the zeppelins, 803 feet long, it caught fire when it struck power lines at Lakehurst in 1937, and burned in less than 30 seconds.

Designed to carry 60 crew members and 50 passengers, the craft had 97 persons on board at the time. Of this number, 35 were cremated, and a member of the ground crew also lost his life.

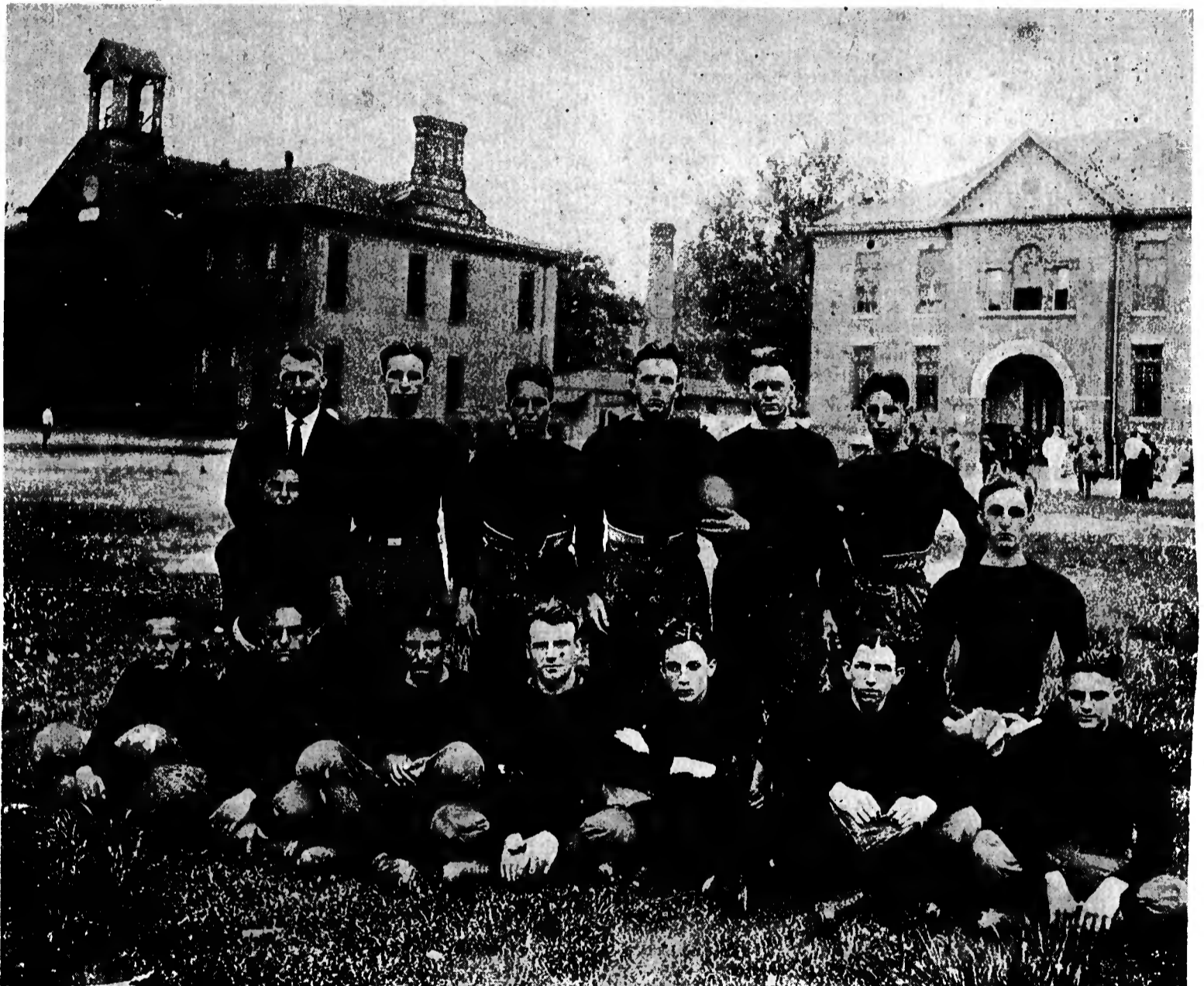
The grim parade of dirigible disasters began in 1921 when England's R-34, first Zeppelin to fly the Atlantic (1919) wrecked at its moorings. Fortunately, there were no fatalities.

That same year, the R-38, built for the United States by England, collapsed and burned over Hull, England, with a loss of 42 lives. Six months later the Italian-built Roma, temporarily filled with hydrogen, exploded over Hampton Roads, Va., and 34 crew members died.

Exactly 10 months later, to the day, a French Zeppelin renamed the Dixmude went down in the Mediterranean, carrying 52 men to a watery grave. Five years later, Italy's Italia crashed en route to the North Pole, and six of the crew were killed.

In retrospect, it is difficult to accept the reasoning of those who clung tenaciously to their faith in this type of aircraft. Much of that faith subsided, at long last, when England's R101 exploded over France, killing 46 Britishers.

The Los Angeles that flew over New Bern on an all but forgotten morning, was, like all dirigibles, painted with



**OUT OF THE PAST**—Pictured here are the New Bern High School Bears of 1920, first of the legendary ball clubs coached by Graham A. (Hap) Barden to state-wide fame. Few in number, with hardly enough uniforms to go around, they were known from the mountains to the coast as a team of exceptional talent and remarkable stamina. A boy who couldn't take 60 minutes of rough going in a bruising battle would have been decidedly out of place in this crowd. Barden, at the initial practice session, ordered his aspiring gridders to get nine hours sleep a night. It required just one full afternoon of tough scrimmage to convince the Bruins they needed all the rest they could possibly get. What the team lacked in poundage, it made up in speed and determination, and from this limited squad would go several youngsters to reap further gridiron glory at Trinity (now Duke), the University of North Carolina, and North Carolina State. Their coach, of course, would give up

teaching school in favor of law, serve with distinction in North Carolina's General Assembly, and finally become a Congressman from this district. Hap was a relentless driver, who drilled the Bears on fundamentals to the point of exhaustion. "Hard but fair" is the way they described Barden. To a man they literally worshiped him, and the passing of a half century hasn't dulled their memories of this man who demanded much from them, and got it. In the front row, left to right, are Bob McSorley, Rexford Willis, Pig Duval, Rudolph Jackson, Caleb Bradham, Louis Foy, and Redmond Dill. Immediately behind them, at each end, are Braxton Pugh and Laurence Stith. Left to right in the back row are Barden, Charles Gaskins, Owen Guion Thomas, John Jennette, Nickey Simpson, and Fred Shipp. Evidently, this photograph was snapped on a warm day. You'll note raised windows in the bell building and the Moses Griffin building.