



The NEW BERN MIRROR

PUBLISHED WEEKLY
IN THE HEART OF
EASTERN NORTH
CAROLINA

Regional Library
400 Johnson St.
New Bern NC 28560

VOLUME 14

NEW BERN, N. C., FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1971

NUMBER 26

Yesterday was when there were 22 eager applicants within a week, after Mrs. Eula M. (Mammy) Jones announced vacancy of a four-room bungalow on property adjoining her own National Avenue residence.

The very first couple dejectedly admitted at the outset that their belongings included two small children. You could have chopped up the gloom with a dull hatchet, but it didn't last long.

"That's one of the requirements," Mrs. Jones told them. "I don't rent unless there are kids, and if the kids have pets, this is even better. They'll have a yard to play in, and if the yard isn't big enough, they can come next door and use my flower garden."

Mammy Jones was like that, a gracious, white haired lady whose own children had long since grown up and moved away to establish homes themselves. In their place she adopted, in her heart, dozens of other small fry.

"If children can't have happiness when they're little, they miss an awful lot," said Mammy. "Before I built the bungalow in 1945, I planned it as a rented home, not just a rented house. I wanted it to be a pleasant place for the tenants, a place to remember after they were gone."

Since New Bern is located close to Cherry Point, her renters were frequently service couples and they weren't around very long. But just as she wished, they would forever remember the bungalow, and their former landlady.

Before she built the cozy house, Mammy rented an upstairs apartment to young Marine couples. That was during World War II, when apartments were as rare in New Bern as a visiting preacher without a hearty appetite.

Some local property owners were reluctant to rent to service personnel, and complained about the abuse that furnishings got at the hands of such couples. Actually, a lot of the furniture was already shamefully shabby.

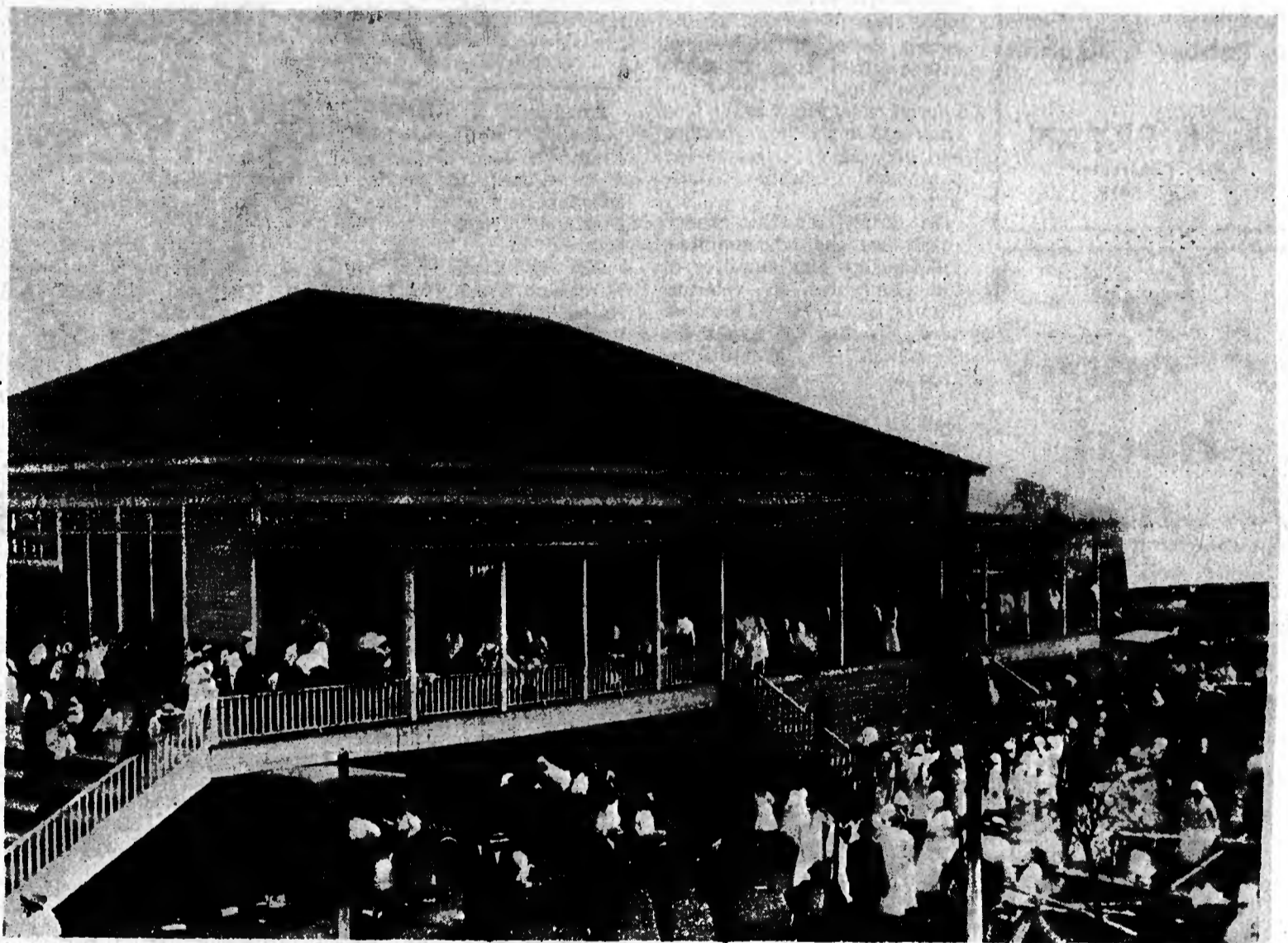
However, Mammy Jones told us she had no unpleasant experiences. "The service couples who rented from me were grand," she insisted. All of them became dear friends, and we're still corresponding, although they're scattered in many states.

Mammy wasn't the sort who pries into someone else's business, but she did ask a lot of questions before she accepted a tenant. "It's better to find out what's what beforehand," she reasoned. "Than it is to come snooping around afterwards." Aside from the fact that she insisted on children, Mammy was anxious to find couples who got along well in their domestic life. She didn't want to have a ringside seat for any marital battles.

After building her happiness house, Mrs. Jones had plenty of chances to sell it at a handsome profit. "I didn't build it to sell."

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New Bern-Craven County Public Library



WAY BACK WHEN—Our thanks to Albert Brooks of Havelock, a native New Bernian, for digging up this rare photo of Ghent Casino, a large wooden structure that stood long ago across from what is now the far end of Park Avenue. Callie McCarthy built it to attract local recreation seekers, who he rightly figured would happily pay a nickel to ride his trolley cars from Down Town and Riverside to the spot. The genial Irishman, repeatedly New Bern's Mayor, provided free entertainment, including movies on an outdoor screen. As seen here, only a few in the huge crowds that frequented the place owned automobiles. Anyhow, riding the trolley cars was cheaper, and a lot more fun. Eventually, Ghent Park was established back of

the Casino. Graham (Hap) Barden's famed New Bern High school gridders of the early Twenties played their home games there, as did other NBHS teams. Syracuse of the International League used the park and building seen here when the ball club held its spring training in our city in 1922. New Bern's Bears of the old East Carolina League became a lasting legend on the diamond that is no more. In its final, ramshackle days, the Casino, much the worse for wear, still served as the best facility available for New Bern High school basketball games. Gone is every visible reminder of the joy and excitement that once reigned on this patch of land, south of the Atlantic Coast Line railroad track, but the memories will not die.

