

# MIRROR

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Yesterday was when one of the fringe benefits a kid got on Christmas morning were raisins still on the stem, in his stocking.

Yesterday was when Teddy Shapou broke an arm playing, and made it unanimous by falling off a pony and fracturing his other arm.

Yesterday was when choirs in New Bern churches didn't wear vestments. Invariably, the most extravagantly dressed soprano sang poorest.

Yesterday was when no one wanted to ban Mark Twain's book from library shelves. Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, around for more than 60 years, aren't perturbed.

What self appointed censors can't appreciate is Twain's capacity to emphasize great truths through the incomparable humor.

Tom's strategy for getting Aunt Polly's fence white washed exemplified the fact that mortals will work their pants off, if it's supposed to be fun.

Never is life more clearly revealed than when stories are utilized. Aesop did it with fables, Grimm with fairy tales, and the gentle Man of Galilee with parables.

To this day, the parables of Jesus are remembered from childhood to old age, and preachers in sore need of a text can always count on them.

Getting back to Twain, we take a dim view of people who are quick to resent humor, without malice, that hits pretty close to home.

If you're overweight, like us, waxing indignant won't stop the flow of wisecracks about fatties. And if you're tall and skinny, there's little you can do to escape bean-pole gags.

What would be left of humor in this grim world if a boycott was declared on all jokes dealing with old maids, nagging wives, henpecked husbands, lingering mothers-in-law, and long winded ministers?

For every story that is in bad taste, and inevitably unfunny, there are dozens that do no harm. Get that chip off your shoulder, and learn the joy of laughing at yourself.

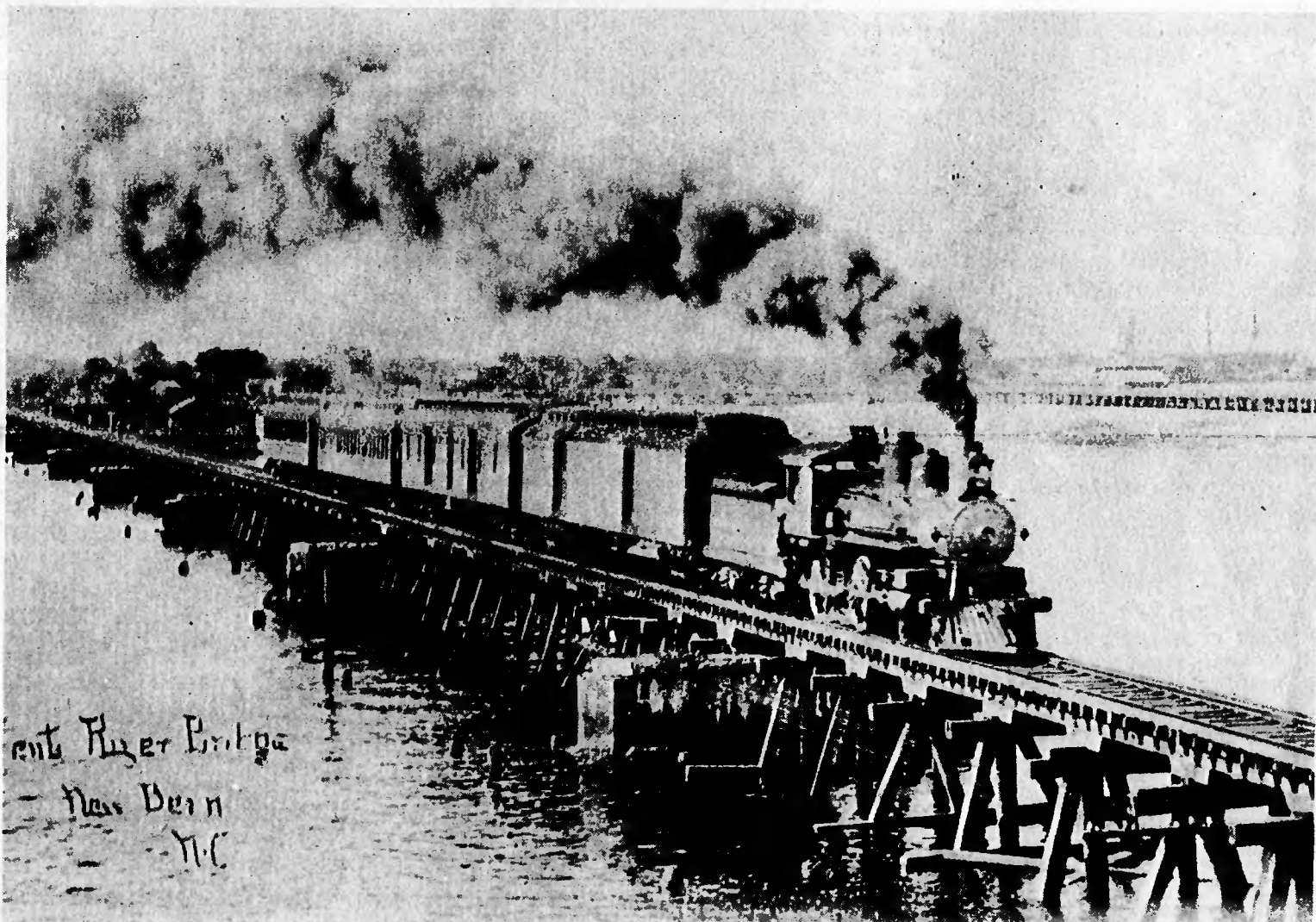
It has always seemed to us that the Irish and the Jews, with exceptions, are above average in their ability to snicker at themselves. The best Hebrew stories and Pat and Mike yarns originated among immigrants.

As a newspaper man, we wouldn't dare try to make a speech, in or out of town, without spinning a tall tale or two about deflating experiences we've had as a "gentleman" of the fourth estate.

Any time you poke fun at yourself, convincingly, your chances are good to get a least one belly laugh from your audience. Lay it on, brother, nobody is going to get mad when you're the target.

You may take yourself quite seriously, but like it or not, others have good reason to find you comical at least part of the time. Be thankful for the fact

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**A SIGHT TO BEHOLD**—Thousands of New Bern youngsters have never been on a train, even one pulled by a diesel engine, and gone forever is their opportunity to watch from New Bern's shoreline a puffing locomotive cross Trent River railroad bridge toward Union Station. The clarity of this old picture is remarkable, and speaks well for the unidentified camera wielder who achieved such sharp detail. The last two units of the train are passenger cars, and in front of them is the mail car. That first car, we feel sure, is the baggage car. Originating at Beaufort, the iron horse will pause just a short while in our town, and then continue to Kinston and Goldsboro. Local kids seldom ever got to take a trip up the line, but when summer arrived,

they could look forward to an excursion to the beach for a Sunday school picnic. Well, not exactly to the beach, because you had to cross the Sound by boat after you got off the train in Morehead City. This made the June or July day even more thrilling. Coming back on the excursion, blistered of course, you nibbled half heartedly at goodies sneaked from the noon lunch, and sang sentimental songs in the dimly lighted cars. Hundreds of today's young New Bernians have flown the skies, and a number have soared across the Atlantic. But riding on a train in the long ago, that was really something.

—Photo from Albert D. Brooks Collection.

