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Yesterday was when that grand old Southern gentleman, W. G. Boyd, passed away at his home here.

Because he resided across the street from us, we saw him often and marveled at his spry gait, his keen mind, and his zest for staying abreast of the times. During his 95 years on earth he was an eye witness to a great many things that we know only from history books, or from legends handed down by relatives long since gone.

As a newspaperman, we were acutely aware of Boyd's ability to recognize and remember what is known in our trade as "human interest" stories. He had a keen sense of humor, and surveyed the bittersweet panorama of human existence with gentleness, tolerance and compassion.

Unlike some who are elderly, he didn't waste his remaining years on denouncing the young upstarts of a new era who had replaced his kind. The good old days were dear to him, but he never lost sight of the fact that, old or new, every day can be a good day if you help to make it so.

Long before we moved to our present location, the home that Boyd lived in had strong appeal for us. There were prettier dwellings in New Bern, but this picturesque house, with its inviting flower garden, seemed to say to all who passed by that here was a spot where lives had been well lived, and serenity of spirit was no stranger.

Boyd was blessed with such serenity. Our most vivid recollections of him aren't hard to single out. We always got alive from the jaunty way he walked home on the Sabbath, after attending the morning service at Christ Episcopal church. With head held high, and a smile on his face, you could tell that here was a man who loved his Lord and found the world delightful, despite its trials and tribulations.

He possessed the rare quality of dignity without aloofness. William G. Boyd was easy to know and easy to respect. A child could approach him without apprehension, and adults were quickly attracted by his unmistakable friendliness.

Because we too love nature, we were impressed by his fondness for flowers. He took great pleasure in showing you about his old fashioned garden, where blooms were permitted to grow with the unrestricted liberty that God intended when he placed them on the face of the earth.

Frankly, we've never cared overly for cats, but the Boyd cats—perhaps through association with this fine gentleman—seemed to be more congenial and more attractive than most felines. Their easy going manner fitted the household perfectly.

Even at 95, Boyd didn't want others to do things for him. He preferred to prepare his own breakfast, for example. Obviously, in view of his longevity,

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New Bern-Craven County Public Library



AS IT USED TO BE—Unless you're a New Bernian 60 or older, you probably don't recall Mr. Charlie McSorley's place, at the corner of Middle and South Front. A do it yourself guy, he made his own ice cream, and taffy candy, fashioned in large shallow pans, that he chopped into appropriate size with a small hatchet, before your very eyes. Here we see him drawing a cherry soda from his ancient fountain. On the right end of the marble counter, in that glass jar, are a number of his ham sandwiches. Customers constantly rebuked him for placing such thin slices in the buns, expecting thickness for the six cents invested. No business downtown was supposed to be open on Sunday morning, but the

cops didn't bother Mr. Charlie. He drew his front shades for the Sabbath, but regular customers entered a side door on South Front, and bought their Sunday papers and two for a nickel cigars. Some even sneaked out with a paper carton of ice cream, dangling from a looped cotton string. Quieter and more dignified than the average Irishman, he was a member of the clan that founded McSorley's famed tavern in New York City. Still in operation, it made world news a year or so ago when forced to admit female patrons. Mr. Charlie had no restrictions here, he welcomed young and old to his ice cream parlor.—Photo from Albert D. Brooks Collection.

