



# The NEW BERN MIRROR

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Yesterday was when, a hundred years ago, New Bern and the nation had its first bicycle craze. Few could afford bikes imported from England, but Pope Manufacturing Company in Boston opened shop in 1878.

It started producing Columbia bicycles, and the same firm still turns out Columbias today. If you're a senior citizen, yours in boyhood carried this trademark, or maybe you had a Crown, Ranger, or Gold Medal.

There are now 73 million bicycle riders in America, and sales in 1972 are expected to exceed the 10 million mark. For the first time since 1897, it is said, bike sales may top automobile sales this year.

"Our industry," says John Auerbach, executive director of the Bicycle Institute of America, "has whole new classes of riders, adults and youngsters alike. They are no longer content with a simple ride around the block."

As Auerbach points out, "They want to go places and do things, and since cars hog the use of highways, riders are demanding equal access to road space. They want recreational bikeways and scenic trails.

And in big cities, workers are demanding commuter routes for bicycles. Rep. Edward I. Koch of New York has introduced a bill in Congress to use some of the Federal gasoline tax for special lanes on existing road.

Nine states have introduced bills in their own legislatures patterned after a law already passed in Oregon. It provides that 1 percent of the highway tax collected by the state be used for bicycle trails.

Rest assured that the politicians aren't shrugging off the demands. There are an awful lot of votes among 73 million bike riders, and no one knows it better than those seeking office, or trying to stay in office.

To say that bicycle riders in heavy automobile traffic can be a menace to themselves, and a nightmare to motorists is a gross understatement. The average kid on a bike is as unpredictable as a chicken on the loose.

Unless provision is made for separate routes, the time may not be distant when citations for recklessness may have to be handed out. We hope this never has to happen, but don't discount the possibility.

Here in New Bern it used to be unlawful to ride a bicycle on a sidewalk, and so far as we know the law is still on the book. It isn't enforced, and few would care to push small children out on streets and highways.

Maybe we're getting overly timid in old age, but it scares us to see a child on a bike in heavy traffic. In fact, it doesn't add to our peace of mind to observe an adult out there among cars, trucks and motorcycles.

Back in our boyhood days it was somewhat different. There were fewer automobiles, and

(Continued on page 8)

New Bern-Craven County Public Library



**WE NEED YOUR HELP**—The rare photographs we have been running from what we've dubbed the Albert D. Brooks Collection have inspired searching by others. Our friend, Louis (Goat) Gautier, came across the photo seen here, but like us he can't identify it. Some of you gals are bound to recognize yourself among the costumed ladies who

appear to be on the steps of the Craven County Courthouse, or maybe you aren't in the picture but know someone who is. Give us the lowdown, and we'll pass it along to our readers. Once again we express our appreciation to those far and near who are showing keen interest in our efforts to get into print for mass enjoyment these relics of the past.

