



Through
THE
Looking
Glass

The NEW BERN

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Yesterday was when your parents would have skinned you alive if they had caught you reading the latest issue of Captain Billy's Whiz Bang, or the Calgary Eye Opener.

Published monthly, these forbidden paperbacks carried spicy jokes and naughty cartoons. Today's youngsters, accustomed to four letter words that neither periodical printed, would find such magazines very dull stuff.

Yesterday was when, exactly 50 years ago, New Bernians and everyone else in the world got highly excited about the discovery of King Tut's tomb in Egypt. The story made headlines for quite a long time.

A pharaoh who was only 18 when he died 3,000 years ago, Tutankhamun quite possibly was murdered. From the moment he became Pharaoh at the age of 9 until he breathed his last, he was manipulated and plotted against.

Great care was taken by his enemies to remove all trace of him above ground, after his death, but no one can say he wasn't put away right. His resting place was an elaborate burial chamber, and we do mean elaborate.

Its furniture included portable beds, chairs, and a gaming table where he could amuse himself as befitted a mummified notable, who was waiting to commence his journey into the Great Beyond.

In ancient Egypt, permanent preservation of a body was supremely important, since it was expected to be used further by its occupant after death. King Tut still hadn't made off with his, when the tomb was opened.

There his mummy was, wearing the solid gold mask that covered head and shoulders. Surrounding him was an unbelievable treasure of bracelets, necklaces and rings, and exquisite vases carved from alabaster.

No wonder a discovery of this magnitude, far across the sea, excited New Bernians in the Ticker Tape Twenties. Temporarily they forgot about Al Capone's gangland rule in Chicago, and Baby Ruth's new record for home runs.

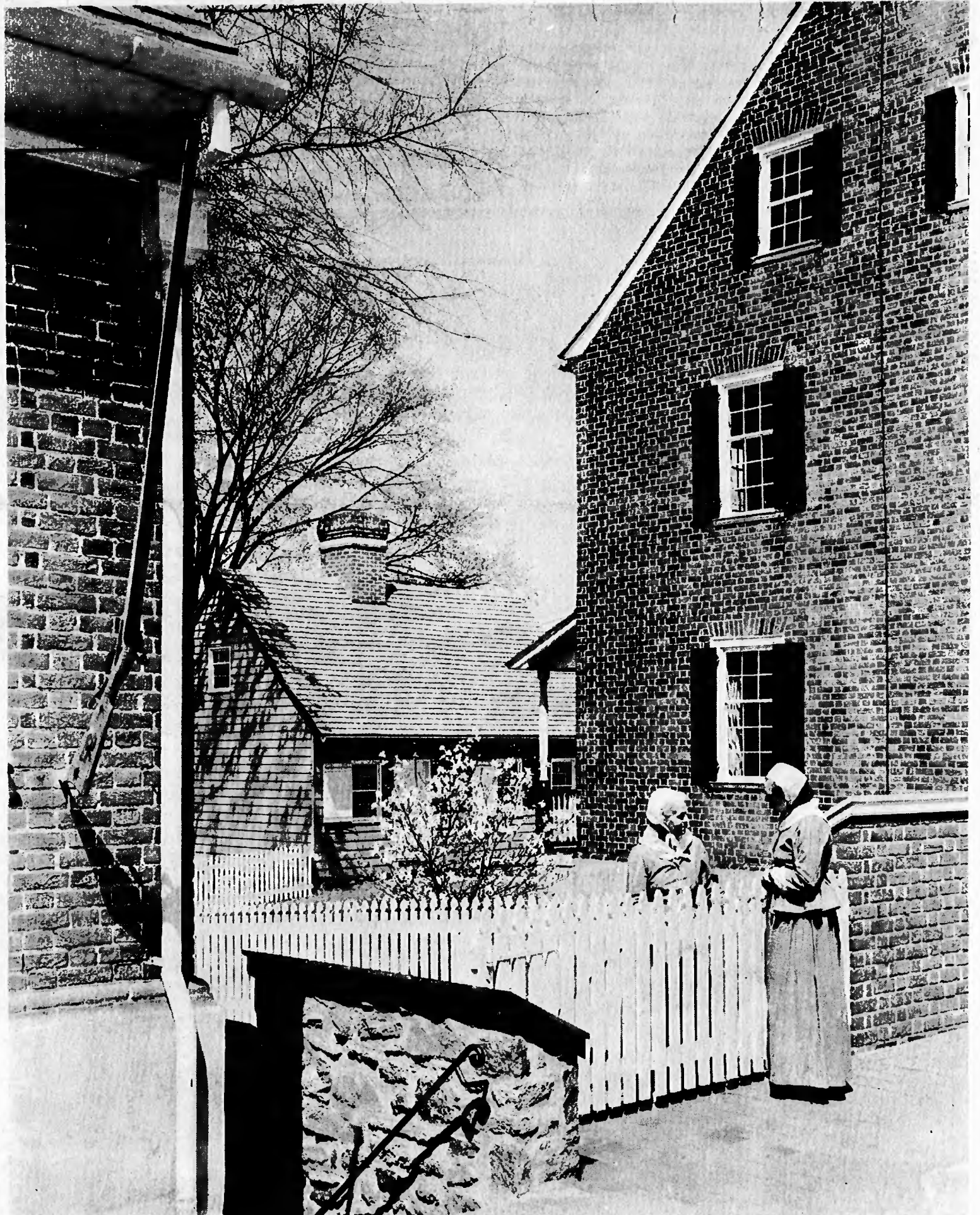
No one along the shores of the Neuse and Trent could foresee, of course, that New Bern would make big news itself that same year. On December 1, a 40-block fire would leave 2,000 homeless here.

Yesterday was when, just four years later, folks in our town got highly excited again. An American girl of portly build, Gertrude Ederle, became the first woman to swim the English Channel. The world acclaimed her.

Her fame lingered sufficiently to make her a top attraction at the New York World's Fair in 1939, where she swam with Johnny Weismuller in Billy Rose's Aquacade. We had occasion to see her perform.

Gertrude's channel crossing is no longer regarded as noteworthy. Florence Chadwick

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EVER THE SAME—Nothing beats a fence to loosen the tongues of neighborly women. Here two of the hostesses at Old Salem take time out to engage in small talk, while there is a lull in tourist traffic. Maybe they're discussing the relative

merits of Skipper Bowles and Pat Taylor, or matters equally weighty, but our guess is their subject is clothes, a favorite recipe, grandchildren, or how long their minister preaches.