

MIRROR

PUBLISHED WEEKLY
IN THE HEART OF
EASTERN NORTH
CAROLINA

Regional Library
400 Johnson St.
New Bern NC 28560



VOLUME 15

NEW BERN, N. C. 28560, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1972

NUMBER 25

Few characters in this grand old town of ours were ever more colorful than Sigmund Bloomgardt, who ran a little second-rate clothing establishment on lower Middle street.

Gloomy, as he was affectionately referred to by natives who knew him, didn't prosper quite as much as some of our other respected Jewish merchants who came to New Bern from across the sea. If that ever bothered him, he didn't complain about it.

Having hailed from Germany, as did his wife, if we remember rightly, he naturally was regarded with a certain amount of hostility during the first World War. He had less than nothing in common with those responsible for that mighty conflict, but it made him an object for suspicion and ridicule just the same.

Small boys living in Bloomy's neighborhood, over on Eden street, used to taunt him whenever he came out of the house, or ventured into his yard. Always it was the same rhyming chant:

"Kaiser Bill went up the hill
to take a look at France;
Kaiser Bill came down the hill
With bullets in his pants."

Actually, Kaiser Bill never got any bullets in his pants, or anywhere else. Defeated in war, he was sent into exile and lived to a very ripe old age. Hence, the chant hurled at Bloomy was more poetry than truth.

Bloomy might have been a beautiful baby, but physical attractiveness wasn't one of his assets in later years. He had an exceptionally ugly face, but his friendly smile worked wonders in winning the favor of all who knew him.

During the depression, when Hoover had everybody looking for prosperity just around the corner, serving on a jury at the County Courthouse was an opportunity rather than a burden.

Picking up a few dollars in this fashion was a fortunate thing for some of the folks who had empty pocketbooks. Bloomy qualified for this category, and landed in the jury box fairly often.

Hard of hearing, he missed most of the testimony, and the big words used by blustering lawyers in their pleas to the jury were, to put it mildly, far beyond his comprehension.

Perhaps it was just as well. At any rate, the juries that Bloomy served on invariably rendered good verdicts, which makes us wonder if it wouldn't be better today if some jurors heard less.

To think of Bloomy is to think of his big black umbrella. He toted it rain or shine, to and from home, and got kidded about it a lot. Those who kidded him got soaked by a considerable number of sudden showers, as the years rolled by. Bloomy meanwhile stayed dry.

It never occurred to this kindly German Jew that he was making history in his journey from the cradle to the grave. Yet, his personality is interwoven in the fabric of New

(Continued on page 6)



NEW BERN HIGH SCHOOL'S VARSITY



NEW BERN HIGH SCHOOL'S JUNIOR VARSITY