



Through
THE
Looking
Glass

The NEW BERN

MIRROR

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There's little in the good old days that holds appeal for me, though others crave a life antique, I'll let the present be....I wouldn't trade electric lights for candles or for lamps, appendicitis is no worse than what was stomach cramps.

The modern maid in stream lined garb to me is quite romantic, but if she had a hoop skirt on, her hugs would drive one frantic....The running water at our house is better than a well....And bath tubs trump those wooden vats when Ma scrubbed little Nell.

Yet, there is one exception, if I could have my way I'd bring those old fire horses back from shrouded yesterday....One night, when station bells rang out, forth from a ghostly stall would charge Big Ben and Jim and Fred, in answer to the call.

I'd see them tremble as they stood in their appointed places, while drivers quickly hooked the straps that held them to the traces....Then down the street, with wild-eyed speed, they'd rush to do their duty, though it would be a mercy trip, it still would smack of beauty.

Dumb animals aren't short of sense, and these old horses knew that someone at a burning home was praying they'd come through....And come through, friend, they always did, regardless of the run, until God tapped them each in turn, and whispered, "Rest, well done."

Perhaps I've got a small boy's heart, that never did grow up, or maybe I've been drinking deep from memory's golden cup....This much I'll say in tribute to old Jim and Fred and Ben, it would be warming to our heart to see them run again.

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Thoughts While Strolling: Few will disagree that H. C. (Harlowe) Waldrop, who joked to the last during his terminal illness at Fayetteville's Veterans Hospital, was one of New Bern's truly whimsical characters.

He looked forward to receiving his copy of The Mirror each week, and from time to time we found witty letters from him in our mailbox, addressed to the "Soul" Editor, as he chose to label us.

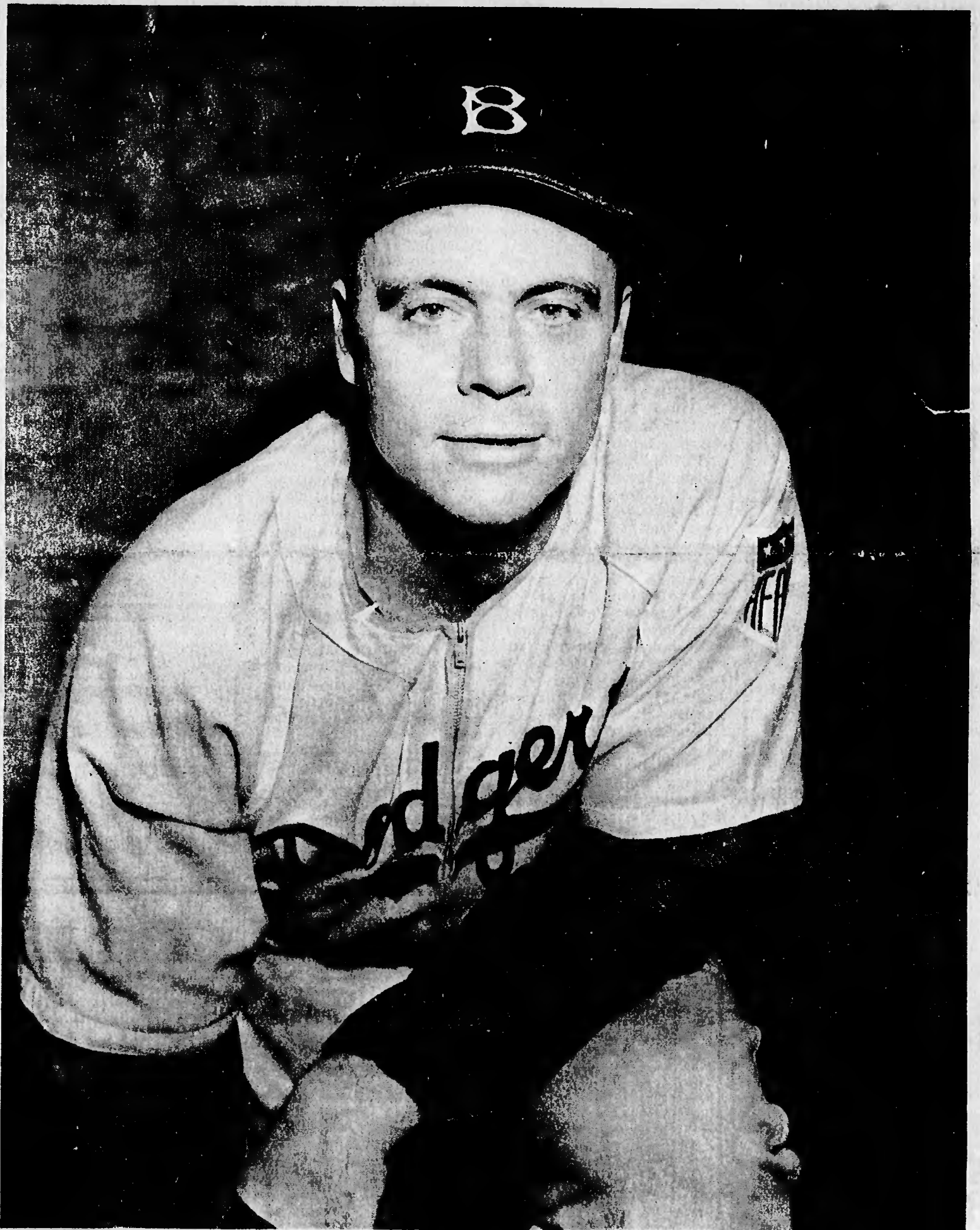
Waldrop, quite a few years back, displayed capricious candor when he advertised a very low piece of land located on Neuse river in the James City section. "Buy it at high tide, and get a free barrel of fish," promised Harlowe.

No one ever accused him of working to the point of exhaustion. He considered life at a leisurely pace the best way to travel from the cradle to the grave, and Middle Street to him was a place to stop and talk for a spell.

Maybe he didn't accomplish much, in terms of material success, but there appeared to be little that was evil in this man. While others relied heavily on thorns of criticism, he seemed content to scatter what he considered humor.

A fellow could lose time, if he got hung up with H. C. Waldrop, but truthfully most of us

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UNPREDICTABLE—Ask any old timer and he'll tell you that there never was another like Kirby Higbe, who got his early seasoning for Major League stardom with New Bern's Coastal Plain League Bears in the Thirties. A sensational pitcher, he was goofier than Gomez and dizzier than Dean, on and off the diamond. Such as driving on the sidewalk in our downtown business section, and convincing a City Court judge he was trying to

escape a woman driver. Once this editor double dated with him, and the kook had a line that just wouldn't quit. Could he pitch? Well, he won 20 games in one season for the last place Phillies, before Brooklyn made a deal for him. Who was his hunting companion after he reached the Majors? None other than that immortal novelist, Ernest Hemingway.