

The NEW BERN

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Back in the days when railroading was one of New Bern's major occupations, no self respecting trainman would have been caught wearing a wrist watch. A pocket watch—almost always a Hamilton—was the accepted timepiece.

Once a month, as we recall, every engineer, fireman, brakeman and conductor headed for Eaton's Jewelry Store, where Jake Ziegler checked the watches for accuracy, and regulated them if necessary. Understandably, even the slightest deviation called for correction.

Pocket watches are still regarded by railroad men as essential for their jobs, not only here but across the nation and around the world. Some of the oldsters have had theirs 40 years or more. They are cleaned every 18 months, in keeping with railroad policy.

We were reading the other day about a survey made among 1,000 employees of the New Haven Railroad. It revealed that only 50 of them use wrist watches. On the Southern Pacific, officials are permitting a switch to this type of watch after 107 years. It seems a manufacturer has made a wrist watch that is acceptable to the industry.

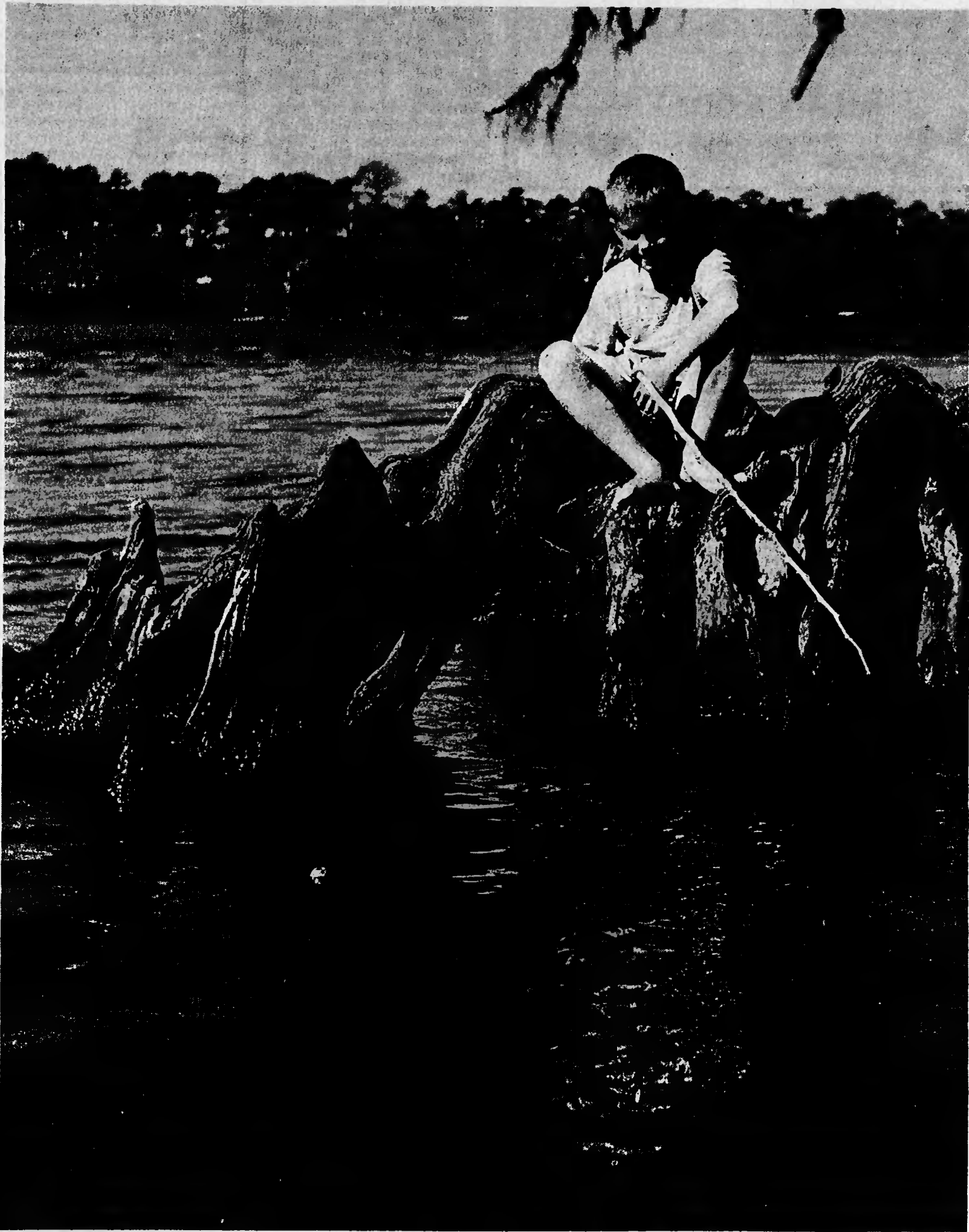
Wearing a pocket watch in the old days wasn't exclusively a railroad practice. All of New Bern's leading citizens (the males that is) sported them, attached to a gold chain strung proudly across their vest. A bay window served to make the chain's appearance more resplendent. To this day, we've never figured out anything else that a monstrous paunch is good for.

The chains went out of style, and in due time the vests became obsolete too. Fairly recently the vest was revived as a piece of attire for the male gender, and dazzling colors have become dear to the heart of sporty individuals around our town. Could it be that watch chains are on the way back, to further brighten the local scene.

Maybe a man is a fool to ever throw away something that he can possibly wear again when the styles change. Certainly a thrifty woman could have saved herself money by storing the bucket-like hats she wore in the Thirties until they became all the rage in the Sixties.

Personally, we've always been impressed by the big picture hats that a tall and stately female can wear so becomingly. Unfortunately, perhaps, a lot of our pretty girls are short, and a picture hat on them looks like a toad frog seeking shelter under a large leaf.

Don't let anyone kid you, men always take a second glance at the gal who is dolled up in something frilly and dainty and feminine. It makes them feel subconsciously protective, and that in turn makes them feel important. When a woman feeds a man's sense of importance, he is easier to capture and subdue than a stray



A Fellow With A Pole Up A Lazy Stream
Can Catch A Fish Or Mostly Dream.
—Photo by Theodore Baxter.