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At our house, whenever a Mirror photo or story links well known local names with a long-ago date, a grim warning is issued to the editor. "Your're going to make so and so mad," is the admonition we can look for.

Because many folks really are touchy about their age, bringing up the past probably does arouse resentment in some quarters. Why anyone should be ashamed for having lived a considerable number of years is beyond us, but they certainly are entitled to the privilege.

Whether you care to express it or not, each of our readers past 50 is apt to have his or her definition of old age. Ours is it's the milestone where a person would be perfectly willing to look a little worse, if they could only feel a little better.

Being able to kid others about your pretended youthfulness isn't much consolation, if your joints creak when you get out of bed in the morning and you feel like you've been stomped on by a herd of elephants. That's why elderly individuals who refuse to yield to grumpiness deserve a special medal.

To tell the truth, there's only one way to hide your age, even temporarily. You'll have to leave your home town. As long as you remain where you were born and grew up, your friends (and enemies) can figure it out for themselves.

"She is bound to be at least 62," someone will say, when idle but not necessarily malicious small-talk is being indulged in at a social gathering. "My sister Evelyn (or Margaret or Elizabeth) is 60, and she was two years ahead of her in school."

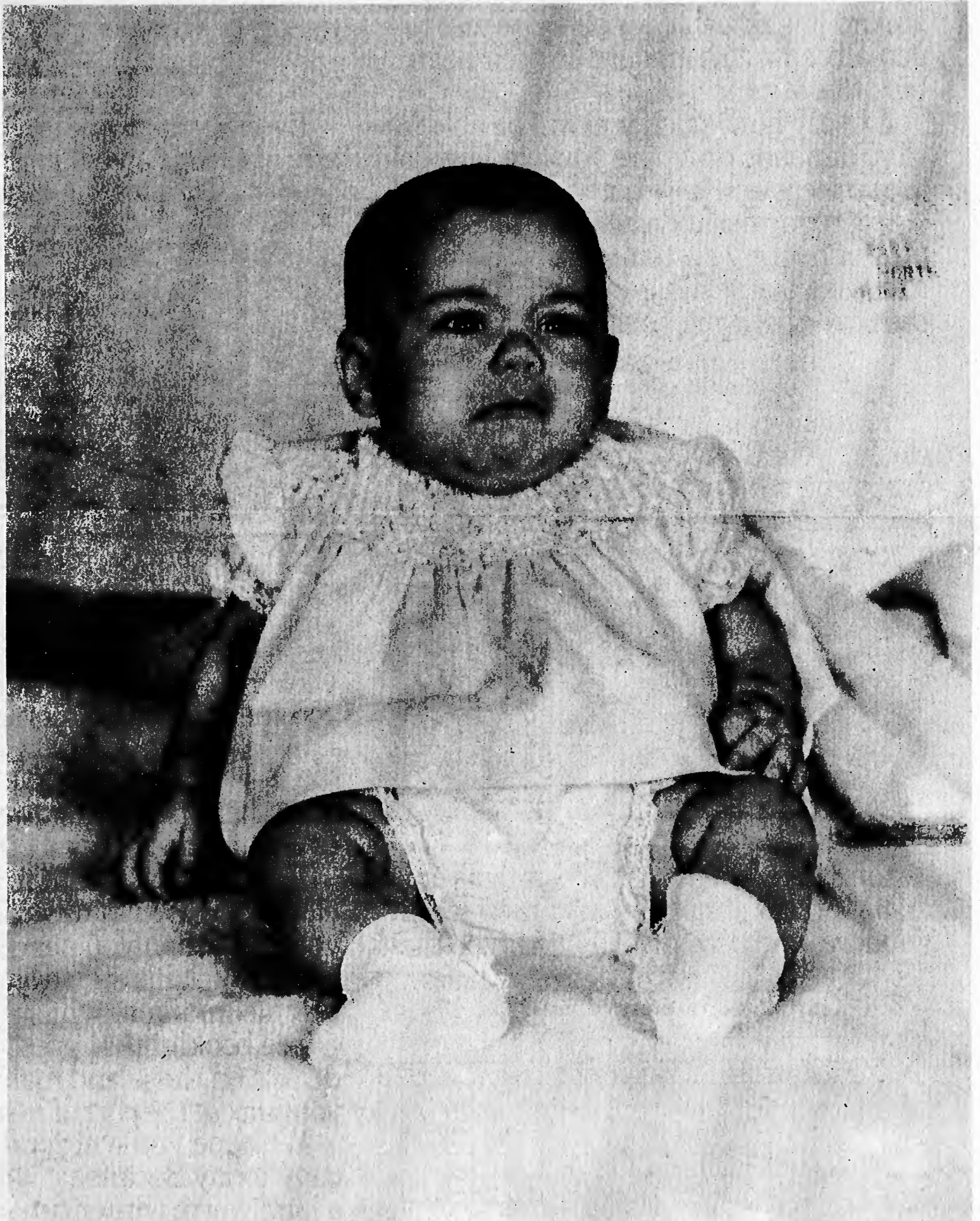
If there is one thing that's remembered for all time to come, it's who was in whose grade, and when. Most of what was learned in the classroom has faded like the dreams you had in your teens, but not your recollections of the pigtailed girl who sat in front of you, or the freckle faced boy who gave you a bloody nose at recess.

At this late stage, we can recall every licking we ever got, not just from the teacher but from fellows who were harder to deal with than we had anticipated. Considering the number of wild-swinging battles in which we happened to be one of the gladiators, that's a lot of remembering.

Perhaps we should be ashamed of it, but so far as this editor knows he holds the distinction of being the only first grader ever expelled for a year from New Bern's public schools. We've admitted it each time we've made a speech in anybody's school auditorium since then.

Superintendent H. B. Smith, sent us on our way, after we overdid thrashing the blass bully during tiptoe recess in the boys' basement. Dunking him apparently was the last straw, from Mr. Smith' viewpoint, but we would no doubt repeat the performance under similar circumstances if the hands of

New Bern-Craven County Public Library



DEFEATED CANDIDATE—Valerie Austin Davis, actually a happy little lady, cooperated fully when we wanted her to show how a politician feels when he loses an election. Tack this Mirror portrait, snapped at Wray Studio, on your wall, as a

reminder that running for office can end in agony. According to Valerie, who will soon be five months old, disappointment calls for a stiff upper lip, like the one she displays here. Her parents are Carol and Donald Davis of New Bern.