

The NEW BERN

MIRROR

PUBLISHED WEEKLY
IN THE HEART OF
NORTHRegional Library
400 Johnson St.
New Bern, NC 28560Through
THE
Looking
Glass

VOLUME 16

NEW BERN, N. C. 28560, FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 1973

NUMBER 4

Many New Bernians are convinced that hurricanes come oftener nowadays than they used to in the long ago. There is little basis for such a belief, although modern communications, expert tracking, and widespread news coverage tend to make it appear that way.

History dating back hundreds of years reveals that the big blows were playing havoc along our Atlantic coast when the first white man arrived, and it seems reasonable to assume that the American Indian had already endured countless years of periodic high winds.

New Bern, founded in 1710, didn't have to wait very long for its first taste of hurricane weather. A severe tropical disturbance came roaring out of the Caribbean the following year, and another followed in 1713. We can't be sure what section of the coast got the brunt of the storms, but for all we know this budding town might have been right in the center of it.

Both of the aforementioned hurricanes came in September like Hurricane Esther, the latest of the lot. As a matter of fact, records show that the first such wind to rake Atlantic shores and find its way into the annals of history was also in September. The year, we are told, was 1575.

There have been hundreds of September hurricanes since then, and at least one of them each year since 1806. Some of them, fortunately, vented their violence in the open sea, but enough of them reached land to kill thousands of people.

Property damage has amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars. The toll in money, here in New Bern, was approximately 15 million dollars for Hurricane Ione. It far exceeded the two and a half million dollars damage that resulted from the disastrous fire on December 1, 1922, when 40 residential blocks were reduced to ashes and 2,000 persons were left homeless. Admittedly, the loss would have been greater had not a majority of the homes been shanties. And of course all property—not just shanties—carried a much lower valuation then than it does today.

All hurricanes foster tragedy, and we've encountered countless things of a pathetic nature during the 30 years we've been covering them for United Press and International News Service now combined as United Press International and for various State papers and for radio.

There was the time when an elderly man rushed out of his home, when he heard fire trucks arriving to fight a blaze in the neighborhood. He came in contact with a live wire that had fallen in the street. His wife ran to his side in a futile effort to rescue him. Both were electrocuted.

Needless to say, we'll never forget wading in waist deep water on lower New street, with other searchers, trying to locate the body of a child who had

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ONCE UPON A TIME—Our thanks to Pete McSorley, at New Bern's main Post Office, who came across this ancient photo while rummaging through keepsakes. It started out as a postcard, printed in 1906, but Pete took it to Florence Hanff at Wootten-Moulton Studio, and she made an excellent enlargement for him. You're looking north, from the end of Middle

Street, and if your eyes are good you'll see the spire of Christ Episcopal Church. That fish cart, and the barrel nearby would be museum pieces today. It must have been pretty close to high noon, judging by the shadows. Incidentally, if you're a senior citizen you know for sure that those two boys seen strolling were wearing black cotton stockings.