

The NEW BERN

## MIRROR

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

VOLUME 16

NEW BERN, N. C. 28560, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1973

NUMBER 27

Not long ago, while writing wistfully of things long gone, we mentioned the Italian organ grinders who used to visit New Bern with their clever little monkeys.

Until fairly recently, organ grinders still made the rounds in New York City. However, authorities have banned them from streets of the metropolis at the insistence of folks who concern themselves with preventing cruelty to animals.

Don't jump to the conclusion that the organ grinders were guilty of such cruelty, although a few may have been. What the monkeys needed protection from was the public--or a vicious segment of the public.

Warped individuals with a sadistic sense of humor seemed to think it was fun to crush a lighted cigarette in the palm of a velvet-coated monkey when he reached for an expected coin.

Man's inhumanity to man in a world of violence is as revolting as it is commonplace, but there's something particularly terrifying about a mind that finds delight in the torture of an animal.

Zoo keepers are familiar with the habits of such mortals. One of the big reasons for signs telling you not to feed caged animals is to protect the imprisoned beasts. Your own safety is involved too, of course.

Many people--children especially--have nothing but goodness in their hearts when they want to feed the zoo's inhabitants. Unfortunately, there are others who think it's a joke to feed harmful objects to the unsuspecting animals.

Getting back to those Italian organ grinders, we used to wonder as a boy just how a hand organ worked. At long last we know. It's a barrel or piano organ--a box with pipes or metal reeds inside.

Inside the box is a roll or cylinder on which pegs are arranged. The pegs open the valves of the various pipes, as the cylinder is turned by a crank. Air enters the pipes and makes the music.

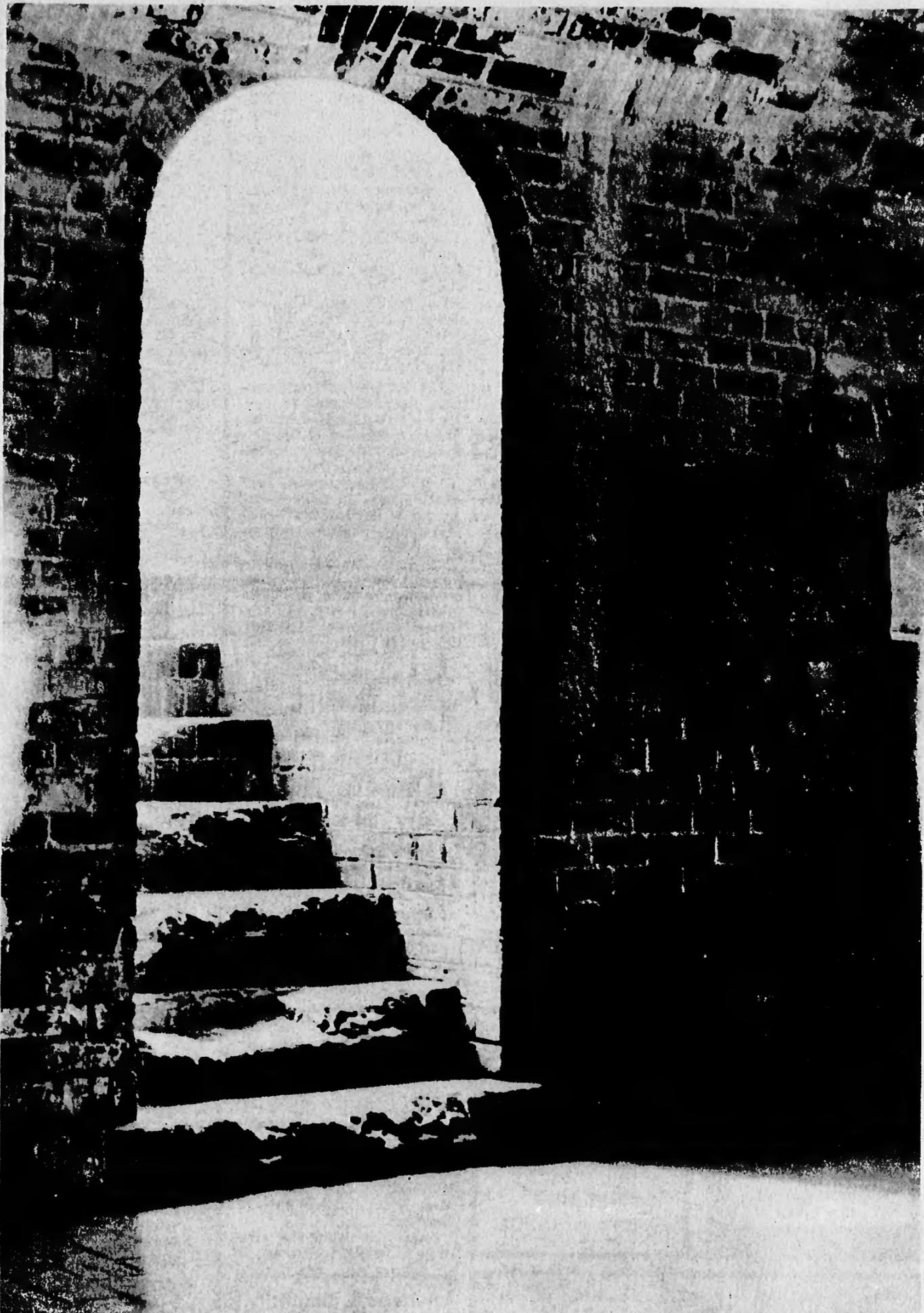
Until we learned differently from the World Book Encyclopedia, we thought as millions still do that a hand organ and a hurdy-gurdy are the same thing. It just shows how wrong you can be when you accept popular belief without question.

The hurdy-gurdy is a very old stringed musical instrument which is seldom played today. Most hurdy-gurdies are shaped rather like lutes. They have from four to six strings. The instrument is played with keys and a wooden wheel.

The keys control the notes to be played, and the wooden wheel rubs the notes to produce music. The wheel is covered with rosin, and is turned by a handle at the end. The hurdy-gurdy originated in Europe many centuries ago.

Getting back to the organ grinder's hand organ, for most older New Bernians it lives in memory as a symbol of childhood. Blended with its notes are the lilting strains of carnival merry-go-rounds and the distant sound of a circus callope--playing outside the Bit Top to invite customers for the evening performance.

It was this steam piano that  
(Continued on page 8)



Time has long since silenced  
Each battle cry and gun,  
And historic old Fort Macon  
Is at peace in autumn's sun.