

WHAT NEXT???

Last week we alluded to how tough the upcoming election was going to get. We predict that we have not seen anything yet. We quoted from a t-shirt last week: *If you can't run with the big dogs, stay on the porch.* We thought the saying was cute. We are beginning to wonder now if we know "the big dogs are" and more importantly, do we want to know? We all recognize some of the master strategists by name and color, we are not sure any of us know who is in charge and where each individual fits into the overall scheme of things.

One thing we all know for sure. There is a terrific battle going on for political and economic control of this county. We have addressed the issue of how some people, we call them master strategists, sit and plan strategic moves to ensure the rise of their own political empire. We predict again that we have not seen anything yet...If we see any one group of individuals, whatever color, end up in a position to influence and in effect control, the next governor of the state, the member of the N.C. Senate, the members of the N.C. House, the members of the board of education and the county commissioners we will witness a continuation of a process designed to control, dictate, and hold the voting public in bondage to the whims of this group...We could easily call the names of most of the local players, Indians, Blacks and whites...Indian people for many years have struggled to stop non-Indians from controlling us. Anytime that people are held in economic bondage, they're slave. This is not right...We have struggled long and hard to overcome this bondage and what we see now is a group of Indian people who are apparently trying to do the same thing...We do not condone changing players and continuing to play the same ball game...We urge all builders and aspiring builders of political empires to do the right thing...It is not right to threaten people's jobs...It is not right to intimidate those who are uninformed...It is not right to move on people economically... We have been threatened here at this

business so many times that we find that it is inspirational...Recently we addressed the LRDA board of directors and expounded on our theory of their plans to control things when federal recognition comes...Recently we were embarrassed to read in the daily newspaper that this same board, apparently was involved in, the use of commodities to influence votes. Intimidation and vote buying in any form is wrong...It is wrong no matter who is doing it...There is no justification for this reprehensible and unprofessional behavior...If commodities are available, give them to persons who are in need. Without restrictions. The writer stated that people were being approached for their votes as ice cream was being distributed...This is almost unbelievable in this day and time. It is a terrible reflection on LRDA and the entire Indian community...And, yes, we have heard who the politicians were...We were encouraged that the writer was independent enough in her thinking to tell what happened publicly...She understood what was happening...She understood implied "vote buying"...She understood that she was being taken advantage of...She understood she was dehumanized...We believe there are thousands of people in this county who can and do reason things out...We believe this is one of the factors that the political strategists can't control...People are not ignorant...People are not robots, or pawns...People are human beings with the capabilities to think and decide for themselves...This is encouraging to us and reaffirms our commitment to continue to publish and continue to question those things that don't appear proper and in some instances, they don't appear legal...We understand more each day why some of our own people wish to see us close up this office and cease to write...For these reasons we are more determined because we believe the upcoming election will demonstrate that our faith in people has not been misplaced...We believe the upcoming election will make a strong statement to the power brokers that people are not easily fooled, misled or intimidated...The LRDA/ ice cream incident reminds me

Along The Robeson Trail

By Dr. Stan Knisk, Director PSU Native American Resource Center

It is now 120 years ago. The date is 21 March 1872. The story in the Lumberton *Robesonian* says that Henry Berry Lowrie is dead. The newspaper states that Henry was killed by his own brother, Tom. Among many white families there is a sigh of relief, perhaps even a glimmer of joy, but tempered with a nagging doubt.

There had, after all, been reports of Henry's death before. Even the prestigious New York *Herald* had carried the story two weeks before that Henry Berry had drowned while fishing in his beloved Lumbree River. And rumors had been spreading through the Conservative community since February that Henry Berry had been the victim of a fatal accident, in which he shot himself in the head while cleaning his rifle (or was it his shotgun?). Those who had hated and hunted him, and those who had merely resisted and resented him, were eager to believe that their collective troubles were over.

But during the same period, late winter and early spring of 1872, the stories circulating in the Indian community were quite different. Henry's brother Steve was quoted in the New York *Herald* (also on 21 March!) as denying the death of Henry, saying that Henry was only hiding out in the swamps "to look after Boss Strong" who was "hurt powerful bad." Also on 21 March, the *Wilmington Review* published the story that Henry Berry had escaped from Robeson County "in disguise."

Stories told later by members of the Lowrie family, but which seem to originate in this same late winter and early spring of 1872, give more details. Reverend D.F. Lowry, a nephew of Henry Berry, told the story in 1970 (at the age of 89) that Henry had been helped to escape by General

Gorman. Reverend Lowry's account has it that Henry Berry was dressed in a militia uniform to blend in with General Gorman's men, and that Henry's head was partially bandaged to cover his real identity.

Another relative, Dr. Earl C. Lowry, reported in the 9 May 1937 *Raleigh News and Observer* that an elaborate trick had been played by the Lowries to conceal Henry's escape. Dr. Lowry's account has it that a dummy made of straw, smeared with rabbit brains, was shown at a distance to several people who then spread the story that Henry was dead. Meanwhile, according to Dr. Lowry, Henry was making his getaway dressed in a Federal uniform, boarding the train at Pates.

So where is the truth among all these stories of what happened 120 years ago? McKee Evans, in his book *To Die Game*, makes the point that both the Conservatives and the Indian community showed the same vigor in expounding their respective sides of the story. Evans says: "The friends of Henry Berry have shown quite as much redundancy in composing ingenious new versions of his escape as his foes have in superfluously re-killing him (p. 247)." But why should this be so?

Perhaps it is simple. James Luna, the modern Diegueno Indian artist/poet, said in a recent lecture in Charlotte: "You see what you want to anyway." Maybe this is a part of our basic human nature--to read into events whatever interpretation best suits our own pre-existing philosophy. But perhaps these stories also demonstrate that you can't believe everything you read in the newspaper.

For more information, visit the Native American Resource Center in Old Main Building, on the campus of Pembroke State University.

Say You Read It In The Carolina Indian Voice

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THIS AGE HEREFTER

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THE LAKE OF FIRE
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