

Along The Robeson Trail

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

Genealogical Glimpses

by Elisha Locklear



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The Native American Resource Center is currently featuring an exciting new exhibit of Southeastern Indian artifacts. These materials come from the Geraldine Velarde Collection, on loan to us from Wes Tauchiray. This assemblage of artifacts reflects many years of collecting from Indian Nations all over the Southeast, from the Lumbee and Cherokee of North Carolina to the Koasati and Houma of Louisiana. This collection also reflects both the similarity and the diversity of Southeastern Indian arts and crafts.

Similarity among these various cultures is shown in several ways. For example, virtually all Southeastern Native Americans grew corn in traditional times, as many continue to do today. This collection includes a beautiful split-cane basket for washing corn meal (while the meal is still fairly coarse) from the Koasati Nation (also spelled Coushatta), as well as a basket for winnowing corn meal from Mississippi's Choctaw Nation. Also included is a small ceramic pot, called an "ai-ca-che," for serving hominy grits from the Alabama Nation (also spelled Alabama; wonder where they came from...although they now live in East

Texas?). Don't forget that the modern word "hominy" (which is dried corn kernels with the hull and germ removed, often coarsely ground) comes into English from the Virginia Algonkian word *rokahamen*, or *rockahominy*. Thus corn and the products made from it are threads of similarity among the traditional people of what is now called the Southeastern United States.

Diversity among the Southeastern Indian Nations is reflected in the variety of baskets -- in the materials used, the decorative designs, and the uses for which the baskets were intended. Compare the relatively plain perpendicular woven pattern of the Mississippi Choctaw split-cane winnowing basket, with the elaborate and more abstract geometric design of the Louisiana Choctaw split-palmetto-stem "bull nose" basket (and both of these are Choctaw!)

Or, compare the parallel decorative patterns of the Koasati corn-meal-washing basket, with the converging diagonal designs of the Chitimacha small basket tray. Then compare these with the Lumbee, Coharie, Seminole and Cherokee baskets on

display from our own Museum Collection. It is clear that although all Southeastern Native Americans traditionally made baskets, diversity of material, design and use was a general rule.

The Geraldine Velarde Collection exhibit also includes a number of other unusual Native American artifacts. Among these are a rare Houma skirt made from woven Spanish Moss (traditional women's wear in much of what we now call the Deep South); a seven-stem ceramic pipe from Cherokee; Lumbee carved spoons, made by Lynn Earl Bullard from buffalo and cow horn; a Koasati cypress-knee drum; and a pair of Tunica lacrosse racquets from Louisiana. And there's more!

To see this fine collection of Southeastern Indian artifacts, or to get more information about the Indians of the Southeast, visit the Native American Resource Center in Old Main Building, on the campus of Pembroke State University.



Let's Look At Qualifications, Not Race of Superintendent

If Mr. Scott Bigelow and Mr. Bo Biggs's opinions are representative of the white population in Robeson County, then race relations are in trouble. Recently, Sir Charles Barkley, of the Phoenix Suns, when asked his opinion about the alleged racial slurs made by Cincinnati Reds owner Marge Schott, "I like guys from the (Klu Klux) Klan," Barkley said. "I respect their point of view. They're not going to be nice to any black people. But to call some body a nigger, then be nice to them or have dinner with them, that's even worse."

As I see it, that is exactly the view projected by Mr. Bigelow and Mr. Biggs as they write article after article demeaning the reputation of Mr. Swett and those who supported him. Both men, in recent editorials make the same statement in regards to the former Robeson County school system under Mr. Swett. "Schools under Swett were never known for academic excellence, or for their pursuit of it. We are struggling today with the legacies all the county's school systems have left us." In my opinion, the above statement is an insult to each individual in the prior county school system. A full explanation should be made to justify that indictment.

Further, Mr. Bigelow, in his quest for vengeance on those board members who voted for Mr. Swett for superintendent of schools, makes his attack in the most personal and racial way possible. He begins with Mr. Deese by saying he ran his campaign on a deceitful note, however, he saves his most potent venom for Mr. Angus Thompson and Mr. Rufus Graham. He portrays Mr. Thompson in the most insensitive manner possible, even going so far as to say that Mr. Thompson was part of a conspiracy, spearheaded by Superior Court Judge Dexter Brooks, Mr. David Parnell, the Justice Department and Governor Martin and the voters. Mr. Bigelow makes the point that Mr. Thompson was not capable of maintaining a successful law practice.

Therefore, he was at the mercy of Judge Brooks for his survival. When logically viewed, it's the most cynical of racist statements. If the above scenario were true, especially that portion involving the governor, why didn't Mr. Biggs stop the governor or was Mr. Biggs a fellow conspirator?

Finally, Mr. Bigelow states: "If he fails (Mr. Swett) he will become the first superintendent in the state to be removed from office, and his school board will follow him out the door." Had Mr. Bigelow not been so busy minority bashing, he would have realized that Mr. William Johnson's failure to make positive progress in the school system led to the threat of state takeover, not Mr. Swett. Mr. Swett and other minorities in the county have much to offer in the way of public service. They are qualified way beyond the standards set forth by notable leaders such as Mr. Scott Bigelow and Mr. Bo Biggs. Mr. Biggs should acknowledge the fact that Southern National Bank's corporate decision was not predicated on the fact that Mr. Purnell Swett was named Superintendent of Schools, but other factors.

Maybe in the near future a listing of Mr. Swett's accomplishments will be posted for all our citizens to see and make informed decisions for themselves based on truth, not misrepresentations.

Bonnie S. Oxendine
Route 1, Pembroke

In Loving Memory

In loving memory of Mr. Princy Cummings, Jr. who departed this life December 20, 1983.

LOVING MEMORIES

Your gentle face and patient smile
With sadness we recall
You had a kindly word for each
And died beloved by all.
Thy voice is mute and stilled the heart.

That loved us well and true,
Ah, bitter was the trial to part
From one so good as you.
You are not forgotten loved one
Nor will you ever be.
As long as life and memory last
We will remember thee.
We miss you now, our hearts are sore,
As time goes by we miss you more.
Your loving smile your gentle face,
No one can fill your vacant place.

Mother, Brothers and Sister

It was the 2nd of December
And in parts of Robeson County
You would think the new Superintendent
On his head was a bounty

So over in Lumberton C of C
There was lots of clatter
Bo Biggs and Scott Bigelow
Wondered what was the matter

They saddled up their horses
and called them by name
one was called red-neck
The other the same.

Their pistols shot bullets
of Bigotry and Hate
"We don't want that Superintendent
But we know it's too late."

So we'll put our shoulder to the wheel
and tighten up pur tush
We'll fake them all out you know
Because we will not push

So let's toast to the "Bigelow Boys"
And may their criticisms cease
as they ride off into the Sunset
May they both "Rest in peace."

Let's get into the Christmas spirit
put Bigotry to an end
All we need is "Peace on Earth"
and Good, Good will toward men.

James R. Locklear
Route 2, Pembroke

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