

AS I SEE IT ... Bruce Barton

Our second storytelling workshop was, indeed, held on Friday evening, November 30, from 3-5 p.m. at the Indian Education Resource Center in Pembroke. Like the first one, it was delightful as friends visited and shared photographs and stories with us.

In preparing for the work-

shop, we were supposed to run this column in the Carolina Indian Voice. I am running it this week because Malinda speculates historically that Henry Berry Lowrie might have been a turpentine when he mysteriously disappeared from Robeson County in 1872.

It makes sense to me. What about you?

THE LUMBEE RIVER FUND

Was Henry Berry Lowrie a turpentine?
by Malinda Maynor, history student at UNC-Chapel Hill and Lumbee River Fund Coordinator

I'm doing a research project on our Indian ancestors who worked in turpentine here in Robeson County and in the tiny community of Adabelle, Georgia, near Claxton. In Henry Berry's time, the country that we think of as cotton, tobacco, and cornfields used to be covered in huge longleaf pine trees. While the natural landscape looked different, Indian people made their living the same way—using and respecting the natural resources that we were given. Henry Berry's friends and cousins probably worked in those longleaf pine forests, scraping the bark off the tree, chipping it, removing the thick sap and distilling it into turpentine. Before the Civil War, eastern North Carolina produced more turpentine than any other place in the world; that's how rich our pine trees were.

But producing turpentine isn't great for the pine trees, and eventually they die. When Robeson County's trees were tapped out, some of our people followed the turpentine industry to Georgia. In fact, William Chavis, a sometime member of the Lowrie gang, was one of the first to go to Georgia, according to author Mary Norment. There they settled in a small community and over the next several decades built their own church, their own school, and established a graveyard. Some continued to work in turpentine but others became cotton farmers; all of them kept in touch with their relatives in Robeson and surrounding counties, and by 1920, many of these families moved back home. They saw a landscape very different from the one they left—rather than pine forests, they saw cleared fields and drained swamps, something much closer to the home we know now.

I wanted to know what that older landscape looked like, so I started asking around to see if anyone had ever seen a "turpentine" tree in Robeson County. Willie Lowry told me he had seen some pine trees with the bark scraped off, on the Lowry family's land at Hopewell. So we drove out there and I met Jason B. Lowry, who told me that that land had been in his family since before Henry Berry's time, and that Henry Berry himself probably tapped those trees for turpentine. "Go on back there and see for yourself," he said, and pointed down the road. "My grandchildren are coming for Thanksgiving and I just cleared the road so they could ride horses back there."

Those turpentine trees are much bigger than the trees found on a pine tree farm. I could barely get my arms around their trunks. And there are no branches on them—they are just huge, solid trunks, full of sap and nowhere near falling down. For each tree, the bark on one side was scraped off, and you could see the slashes that Henry Berry and his brothers had put in the tree to make the sap flow. In the past hundred and fifty years, the tree's bark tried to grow around the slashes and heal its wound. These trees are like tombstones, marking a way of life that has passed on but is not forgotten.

If you are familiar with these old landmarks of our history, or if someone in your family went to Georgia to work in turpentine, come to our Lumbee River Fund Storytelling Workshop on Friday, November 30 from 3-5 pm at the Indian Education Resource Center in Pembroke. Bring an old family photo and a story to share with the group. We'll record your story on audiotape and duplicate your photo.

For more information, contact Malinda Maynor at mmaynor@nc.rr.com, or Hatty Miller at 910-521-1511, or redmoon1239@cs.com.

Happy Birthday



Shirley Oxendine of Pembroke, N.C. will celebrate her 67th birthday on December 6, at her home with relatives and friends. She is the daughter of the late Mr. James Sanford Oxendine and Mrs. Dovie Oxendine. She is a member of the Union Chapel Community Baptist Church.

Editorially Speaking

A Friendly Amendment to the Lumbee Constitution and a good decision at Prospect School

The closing of Prospect School was a good decision. Students there have tested positive for E-coli and the source had not been determined. The safety of the children should always be foremost in the minds of the Superintendent and the board of education. Supt. Barry Harding closed the school until today. That is right and as it should be. According to the Robeson County Health Department, as of Monday afternoon, the source of the E-coli bacteria was still unknown. Food and water samples sent to the state laboratory on Friday tested negative. Prospect school cafeteria workers tested negative also. There are eleven children diagnosed with E-coli and nine of them are students at Prospect School. It is serious business and we are happy that the Superintendent took a firm stand in favor of caution and safety of children.

Now the racist editor of the daily newspaper continues his personal role in the agenda to remove Indians in positions of power. He has stated that Supt. Harding was wrong when he closed the school. Isn't that interesting? Dr. Harding falls into the category with the rest of us people of color who can think, in our assessment of the racist editor's ranting and raving. The only Indian he likes is one like Patrick Bullard, chairman of the board of education, who is willing to serve as a Scout for the whites as they plot and plan to destroy other Indians. The daily newspaper made it appear that Prospect was closed indefinitely and there was a great crisis over there. But we see through his subtleties and nuances. He also has Mitchell "Bosco" Locklear, native of Prospect on his hit list. We wonder what his editorial would have been like if E-coli had been found at Carroll Middle School or East Lumberton or any other predominately white school. We wager that he would have raised Cain, if the school had not been closed. Continue to make your own decisions, Dr. Harding, and Bosco Locklear. The plain facts are that short of turning white or playing the role of a Scout for the racist editor and his calvary, you can do nothing to satisfy him. Unless of course, you resign!!! When will the racist editor begin to understand that we know what his game plan is??? Perhaps never because then he would have to admit that we can think. Why not be totally honest, Mr. racist editor, and state publicly that you believe that no Indian is capable of making decisions without being led by you or Terry Smith, Millicent Nealy, Steve Martin, and other klan-mentality people. We would again encourage Indian people to stop spending your money with people like the editor of the daily newspaper who refuses to say anything positive about an Indian in a position of authority.

We are amazed sometime at how well Dr. Harding administers the Public Schools of Robeson County with six votes, seemingly against everything he does. But we will not rehash the Terry Smith contingency and their klan-mentality. We simply commend the superintendent publicly and remind him that right eventually wins out.

A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT TO THE LUMBEE CONSTITUTION
Mr. Garth Locklear who is helping secure signatures for the First Amendment to the Lumbee Constitution, calls it a "friendly amendment." We like that terminology. We are grateful for those of you who have expressed an interest in signing our petition to amend the Lumbee Constitution. The recently

adopted document states that the territory is "the State of North Carolina." Our proposed amendment is to change the territory to "Robeson and adjoining counties." Securing signatures for the amendment is refreshing and interesting. Only one person has failed to sign. He felt that it was too soon to propose an amendment and that is okay. We feel the territory should reflect the historic territory of the tribe, Robeson and adjoining counties. We will present our petition and let the people decide.

According to the Constitution, the petition to propose an amendment must bear five percent of the enrolled members who are 18 and older. That has been calculated to be 750 names. However, we will continue to solicit signatures and have set a much higher personal goal although a higher number is not required by the Constitution.

The Constitution also states that the proposed amendment must be presented to the Elections Board and the Elections Board will be responsible for verifying names and putting the proposed amendment before the people for a vote. It is, therefore, extremely important that the Tribal Council move forward with the appointment of the Elections Board. Encourage your representative to appoint this very important board. We would love to see the council utilize those members of the tribe who have served with the Robeson County Board of Elections. But that will be their decision. The Constitution also states "The Tribal Elections Board shall consist of five enrolled members over the age of eighteen (18) appointed by the Tribal Council. For purposes of this appointment, the council members shall be divided as equally as possible into five (5) groups by some method of chance. Each of the five council groups shall appoint one Elections Board member. The Board members shall have six year terms and may not serve consecutive terms."

Hopefully, the statement "some method of chance" will not cause an unnecessary delay in appointing this board. We are encouraging our representatives to make these appointments in a timely manner.

When the proposed amendment passes, the council will eliminate three seats effective 2003. Those seats are currently held by Darlene Jacobs of Raleigh, Lonnie Revels of Greensboro and Rosa Winfree of Charlotte. These three people, upon the passing of the amendment, would no longer reside in the tribal territory and therefore be ineligible to serve on the tribal council.

As the Constitution reads now, it is possible for the Tribal Chairman to reside outside Robeson and adjoining counties. It seems only right that those who represent us and make decisions for us should also live among us. Did you know without the amendment on the territory, Jim Lowry of High Point could be elected tribal chairman. When we think of him we are reminded of the court ordered LSD Commission and we don't ever want to travel that road again. Neither do we want to end up in court over trivial matters that can and should be handled internally. So, encourage your representative to appoint the elections board and if you haven't signed a petition and you want to be a part of this "friendly amendment," call 521-2826.

This article is written by the editor, Connie Brayboy, and contains her personal opinions and from the many phone calls I receive, Indian people do understand subtleties and nuances.

Happy Birthday Rodney "Skippy" Cummings

Our Strength



Rodney Cummings is pictured here, at the far left, with Mrs. Jessie Maynor's First Grade Class. Mrs. Grace Locklear is the Student Teacher.



The family of Rodney Cummings celebrated his 55th birthday on December 2, 2001 at his home at O'Berry Center in Goldsboro, N.C. Rodney's birthday cake was made by Mrs. Evelyn Cummings of Pembroke, N.C. Rodney's birthday cake was his favorite kind of cake, "CHOCOLATE". Rodney was born on December 6, 1946. He is the son of the late Rev. and Mrs. Grady Cummings. Rodney has been a resident of the O'Berry Center since 1962.

Rodney is the brother of Susan and Felicia Cummings of Pembroke, N.C. and Virginia Sanderson, of Columbia, S.C. and Grady Cummings, Jr. of Fayetteville, N.C. He has one niece, Amy Sanderson, and one nephew, Brad Sanderson, of Columbia, S.C.

In the 1996 Summer Olympics Games, the U.S. won the most medals, 110, and the most gold medals.

THE CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE NEWSPAPER
Published Each Thursday Morning By
FIRST AMERICAN PUBLICATIONS
Telephone: (910)521-2826
2ND CLASS POSTAGE PAID
AT PEMBROKE, NC 28372

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
One Year, In State-\$25.00
Two Years, In-State, \$50.00
One Year, Out-of-State- \$30.00
Two Years, Out-of-State \$60.00

Please pray for us, and we'll pray for you.
We need your prayers always.
God bless each and every one of you.

Pembroke Twilight Christmas Parade Set December 13

Pembroke Twilight Christmas Parade, sponsored by the Town of Pembroke, Pembroke Chamber of Commerce and Pembroke Civic Club, will be held Thursday, December 13, 2001 at 4:30 p.m. Line up time is 3:30 p.m.

The parade line up are the UNC Pembroke Performing Arts Center and the parade will end at the Pembroke Elementary School.

Included in the parade will be marching units, bands, queens, floats, with special attraction Robeson County Sudan Tomcats Funny Cars. The main attraction will be Santa Claus.

For further information contact Gregory Cummings at the Pembroke Town Hall, 521-9758.

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