

UP FROM DUST AND DARKNESS

—By Lew Barton—

CHAPTER 1: In The Beginning (Continued)

But while Columbus at first spoke kindly of the Indians, praising them for their fidelity, intelligence and friendliness, he treated them unkindly, eventually. In order to appease some of his bitterly complaining colonists, who quite under-standably learned in short order that the New World was no Europe, he appropriated some of the lands nearby of nearby Indians and then enslaved them for the purpose of tiling their erstwhile property. (See "Columbus," New Standard Encyclopedia.)

He encouraged the Indians to think of himself and his colonists as "gods," using his knowledge of a soon-to-come eclipse as a clincher. According to researchers of Indian history attached to the Mor-mon Church, the only American church whose dogma revolves around the American Indian, the Indians had reason to believe this inasmuch as their prophecies foretold the coming of a Messiah. I used to feel deep shame as a child when I studied the textbooks

of American history and read how Indians fled at the approach of Columbus because some of those books pictured the Indians as cowardly because of this. It was only many years later, after I had become a man, that I learned the real reason as to why the Indians had fled. Amazing as it may seem, a number of Indian groups did look expectantly toward the coming of a Messiah, no matter by what name they called him. It was only logical that these names should be different among Indians who, after all, spoke different languages. There were hundreds of languages among the Indians. These were so unknown to the rest of the world, as they still are today for that matter, that an Indian language was used during World War II by the Allies as a means of sending messages in "code." It was a code that neither the Germans nor Japanese ever succeeded in breaking. (See early colonial drawing of the Indian fleeing at the approach of Columbus.) (This page reprinted from **The Most Ironc Story in American History.**)

The mistreatment of the Indians by Columbus, as it turned out, portended an evil omen. While it has been conservatively estimated that there were 846,000 American Indians in what is now the United States at the approach of Columbus, by 1865 there were but a mere 250,000 if we are to believe U. S. Census figures. Gunpowder pitted against bows, arrows and other primitive weapons, along with small pox against which the Indians had built up no immunity (never having known the disease) and general dissipation had taken their deadly toll. No wonder Dr. Martin Luther King wrote: "To focus upon the Negro alone as the 'inferior race' of American myth is to miss the broader dimensions of the evil. Our nation was born in genocide when it embraced the doctrine that the original American, the Indian, was an inferior race. Even before there were large numbers of Negroes on our shores, the scar of racial hatred had already disfigured colonial society. From the sixteenth century forward, blood flowed in battles over racial supremacy. We are perhaps the only nation which tried as a matter of national policy to wipe out its indigenous population. More over, we elevated that tragic experience into a noble crusade. Indeed, even today we have not permitted ourselves to reject or to feel remorse for this shameful episode. Our literature, our films, or drama, our folklore all exalt it."

It may be safely maintained that American history, as most Americans have come to know it, began with the arrival of Columbus on that fateful morning of October 12, 1492, and that the history of race relations in the Western Hemisphere began at that same moment of time. Not that Columbus had set out to discover "a new world." Leaving Palos, Spain, on August 3, 1492, Columbus had been in search of a new route to the riches of the Indies. Like many of the educated men of Columbus' day, the adventurous Italian had believed that the earth was round--not flat as the untaught supposed. He reasoned, therefore, that he could reach the East by sailing west, thus avoiding the longer, more dangerous route around Africa. Good trade winds favored Columbus, but after three weeks at sea, his men were so frightened and discouraged that they threatened mutiny should Columbus not agree to turn back. Columbus, however, persuaded, punished and finally promised to turn the ships around should not land be sighted in the next 48 hours. This was October 10, and on October 12, land was sighted.

One can imagine the lusty cheers that went up as the men, who had been fearful of sailing right over the edge of the world or eaten by some fearsome sea monster, caught a glimpse of what is now Watling's Island. Columbus went ashore the next morning and took possession of the Island in the names of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain, and doubtless also in the name of the Almighty. It was the first two mentioned who had sponsored his voyage. Believing that he had reached his intended destination, he thus opened a brand new chapter in world history without even realizing it.

Inasmuch as undoubted history states that the Indians were already here when Columbus arrived on the scene, it is clear that the Indian bumper stickers proclaiming that **INDIANS DISCOVERED AMERICA** are quite correct.

Indeed, if we are to accept written records as incontrovertible historical fact, Columbus was not the first European to discover America. Yet the school child who answers "The Indians" when the teacher asks, "Who discovered America?" is likely to be in big trouble, even in today's enlightened times. Indians are not supposed to be able to do anything as intelligent as migrating from Asia and thus discovering America, even though there is just a 56-mile span of water between that continent and this, and even though they were here when Columbus reached American shores. As a matter of historical fact, however, sailor-adventurers of the northern seas, also called Norsemen, often operated hundreds of miles off the shores of Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Having unusually-strong ships for their times, they could and did sail far out from their home ports. It has been recorded that in 1000 A. B., Leif, the son of Eric the Red, discovered the coast of North America; but it seems to have treated so little interest that it was forgotten or unknown generally by the time Columbus set sail on his harrowing adventure.

Columbus did get her how ever, no matter how haphazardly he did so; and it was his discovery of the New World that sparked interest and finally led to the European colonization of America. Which, after all, is no little historical accomplishment. And although he did not discover America, he did discover the Indians who had done so, nobody knows how many centuries before the birth of the Christian era in Europe.

(To be continued)
Newspapers are virtually the only written means of communication about public issues and concerns in a local community. They are the common equalizer—the only publication likely to be read by all citizens as adults.

Dogwood Baptist plans homecoming

There will be a Homecoming Sunday, October 3, 1976 at Dogwood Baptist Church. Sunday School will be at 10:00 a.m. and morning worship at 11:00 a.m. The speaker for the morning will be Chancellor English E. Jones from Pembroke State University. Later, dinner will be served with special singing starting at 2:00 p.m. Everyone is cordially invited to come.

Obituaries

MRS. LOTTIS S. BELL

Final rites were held for Mrs. Lottis S. Bell, 77, Sept. 24, 1976 at Pembroke First Baptist Church. Mrs. Bell died September 21, 1976. Officiating ministers were Rev. T. M. Sweet, Rev. Chesley Hammonds and Rev. James H. Woods. Burial followed in the Ten Mile Center Church.

include her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Silas Strickland; two daughters, Mrs. Vernon Steen and Mrs. Willa Wilkins; three sons, Ted Cummings of Columbia, SC; Nethan Cummings of the home and Donnell Cummings of Lumberton; and seven grandchildren.

RAYMOND DEESE

Final rites were held for Raymond Deese, 62, at Berea Baptist Church on Wednesday Sept. 26, at 4 p.m. Officiating ministers were Rev. Sidney Oxendine, Rev. Dawley Maynor and Rev. Chason Oxendine.

Mr. Deese was married to the former Lockey Lowry Deese. Surviving are three sons: Raymond Earl Deese of Pembroke; Robert Deese of Maxton; and Michael Deese of the home; three daughters, Mrs. Rosa Sampson of Pembroke; Mrs. Sue Betty Lockier of Pembroke; and Mrs. Flora Woodell of Pembroke; his mother, Mrs. Saly Deese of Pembroke; two brothers, Walter Deese of Dallas, NC; and Pernel Deese of Pembroke; six sisters, Mrs. Isa Valander of Royal City, SD; Mrs. Carrie M. Colinger of Dallas, NC; Mrs. Christine Wolford and Mrs. Maudie Thompson, both of Baltimore, Md.; Mrs. Flowere Oxendine and Mrs. Adelaide Jacobs, both of Pembroke and nine grandchildren.

GARY OXENDINE

Gary Oxendine, 18, was funeralized on Sunday, Sept. 26, 1976 at Pleasant View Baptist Church with Rev. Roy Maynor and Rev. Vester Oxendine officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

Survivors include his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Oxendine of Orrum, NC; one sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Callahan of Lumberton, NC; and two brothers, Mr. W. G. Oxendine of the home and Mr. Gena Oxendine of Wagram, NC; his maternal grand mother, Mrs. Roody Lambert of Fairmont; his paternal grandmother, Mrs. Emmie Hunt of Route 2, Fairmont.

VERLIE MAE CUMMINGS

Verlie Mae Lockier Cummings, 56, was funeralized on Sept. 26, 1976 at 3:00 p.m. at New Prospect Church in Pembroke. Rev. Grover Oxendine, Rev. Willie Scott and Rev. Kelly Sanderson were officiating ministers.

She was the wife of the late Ernest Cummings. Survivors

More People, Places & Things

CAR NOT RACING SULLOCOMOTIVE PATROL DECLARES

A car that collided with a train at Rennett Saturday night killing five persons was not racing to beat the Seaboard Coast Line locomotive to the crossing as originally reported. High way Patrol officials said Monday.

Trooper R. W. Hill said the car was traveling about 30 miles per hour and the train about 40 mph at the time of the impact.

All occupants of the car were killed. They were the driver, Donnie Scott, 21, of Wade; David Hall, 23; his wife, Shelby Jean Hall, 21; their 4-year-old son, David Hall; and Hall's sister Susie Hall, 16, all of 1717 Long St., Fayetteville, the trooper said.

Hill said the foliage at the crossing prevented the train's engineer, R. P. Sanderson, or the driver of the car to see one another until just before they collided.

"You can't even see the train until about 30 feet from the crossing," he said.

Scott, the car's driver, apparently tried to stop after seeing the train engine. There were skid marks indicating Scott applied the brakes, the trooper said.

"I don't think it was anybody's part," Hill said.

The five deaths brought to 43 the number of traffic fatalities inside Robeson County this year.

PEMBROKE STATE RUNNER CITED

PSU freshman Gary Henry has been named NAIA District 29 "cross country runner of the week" for the second week in a row.

Henry ran away from the field in capturing the sixth Pembroke Invitational Saturday.

Henry ran the five-mile course in 25:12 and finished 250 yards ahead of PSU's Jeff Moody. Pembroke State took the first five spots and seven of the first 10.

PROSPECT DOWNS TROJANS CLAIMS 2ND IN CAPE FEAR

The Prospect Cats overwhelmed the Magnolia Trojans 42-6 Friday night in a Cape Fear conference test. Prospect rolled up 454 yards rushing while their defensive team held the Trojans to 15 yards on the ground.

The Cats opened the contest quick when Steve Cummings hit paydirt on a four yard run. The Cats failed on the conversion try but picked up the points later in the quarter on a safety and held an 8-0 first quarter lead.

In the second quarter Marvin Locklear scored on a five yard run to start the scoring, but the conversion failed. Mitchell Cummings took care of things through the balance of the quarter as he picked off a Prospect pass and ran 83 yards for the score and added the two-point conversion to set up a 22-0 halftime lead.

The lone score by Magnolia came in the third quarter when Tonya Kerns took a kickoff and returned it 70 yards for the only Magnolia touchdown of the night.

The Prospect Cats now prepare for their non conference test with the Pembroke Warriors next Friday. The Cats record is 3-1 overall and 2-1 in conference play. Magnolia with an 0-3 record entertain the Littlefield Hornets in a conference test.

CLARKTON CLUBS FAIRGROVE

Halfback Johnny Jones rushed for 169 yards on twelve carries to lead his Clarkton Blue Devils to a convincing 36-14 win over the Fairgrove Bears. Jones scoring three touchdowns and his teammate Curtis Chancey adding 136 on 20 carries and two touchdowns led the onslaught.

The Clarkton offense rolled to a total of 339 yards on the ground and added twenty yards in the air. Chancey scored on a twenty yard pass play, and a ten yard run in the third quarter. Jones scored in the second quarter on a three yard run and then scored in the third and fourth quarter of the game on runs of 80 yards and 12 yards respectively.

Clarkton raised its Cape Fear 1-A record to 2-1 and overall mark to 4-2. Fairgrove meanwhile slipped to 0-3.



The New York Public Library

A very old drawing of the American Indians as they fled from Columbus in 1492. Presumably, this scene took place on San Salvador (now Watling's Island), an island of the Bahamas group. The Indians mistook the Europeans for gods. That Columbus took advantage of this misconception is proved by the later fact that he compelled them to do his bidding by foretelling an eclipse of the moon. In describing his fourth and last voyage to America, New Standard Encyclopedia says: "The natives, friendly at first, were made hostile by the bad conduct of some of Columbus's followers. They stopped providing food until Columbus worked on their superstitions by foretelling an eclipse of the moon." In describing the third voyage, this source says: "On his return to the colony, . . . Columbus found general unrest among the settlers. In an effort to calm them, he divided the land among them and made slaves of the Indians." This was an action with which Queen Isabella of Spain was very much displeased. Thus we see that what started out to be a beautiful friendship ended because the Indians were exploited (for the first but not the last time in American history). Ironically, the Indians were not only deprived of their lands, but were actually forced into slavery to work them.

Let us examine briefly estimates of the Indian population throughout the New World at the coming of Columbus: The accepted figure given for North America north of Mexico is 1,150,000; within the territory now the continental United States, 846,000; Canada, 220,000; for Alaska, 72,000 for the USA west of the Mississippi, 300,000 or less; for Greenland, 10,000.

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