

"Building Communicative Bridges
in A Tri-Racial Setting"

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CARL BRITT CHOICE OVER HERMAN DIAL FOR ROBESON County chairmanship Indians Morgan & Hunt vote for Britt

by Bruce Barton

LUMBERTON--I knew it was going to be one of those "crazy Robeson County" days when I was awakened at home Monday morning by a caller, "Hey, get up, if we can get one of the Indians to vote for Herman we've got the chairmanship again..."

Of course it was impossible to get any commissioners on the phone because meetings seemingly were going on all over "Crazy Robeson County," as one wizened observer termed tri-racial Robeson County recently.

I climbed out of bed and hurried toward the Robeson County Courthouse where the County Commissioners were meeting. The first item on the agenda was "reorganization," the naming of the chairman, vice chairman and chaplain for the coming year--an annual ritual in Ol' Robeson.

They were counting the votes for chairman as I walked in. Jack Morgan, the Indian Commissioner from the Red Springs District, nominated Carl Britt. Also voting for him was J.W. Hunt, the Indian Commissioners from Rowland. Sammy Cox, one of the Lumberton Commissioners, added his vote. And, of course, Carl Britt, the Fairmont Commissioner, voted for himself.

And Carl Britt had it. Herman Dial, the long time, influential, Indian Commissioner from the Pembroke-Maxton District found himself holding hands with strange bedfellows--H.T. Taylor, the other Lumberton Commissioners,

and Bill Herndon, the St. Pauls Commissioner.

An observer called it, "The strangest, crazy quilt alliance I have ever seen in all my years of observing Robeson County politics."

Now get this. Voting for Carl Britt were Morgan, Hunt, Cox and Carl Britt himself. Herman Dial came up short with three votes--himself, Bill Herndon and H.T. Taylor.

Who would have believed it? A few days ago H.T. Taylor, the white Commissioner from Lumberton, was quoted as saying in the local press that he had "enough votes to be named chairman." It was not to be. Taylor had said he had commitments from Sammy Cox, Carl Britt and Bill Herndon, all white and conservative commissioners like himself.

It seemed like Herman Dial didn't have "a snowball's chance in hell of retaining his seat," as one of the boys said in Town and Country Restaurant, one of Pembroke's favorite watering holes. It seemed like the three Indians were left out of the politicking, like three knots on a log.

But the action was just getting started at this point. Reliable sources note at this point Herman Dial, Jack Morgan and J.W. Hunt approached Carl Britt and offered their support to him for the chairman's seat. As J.W. Hunt put it, "We shook hands on it (the commitment) and we gave our word." It looked

like the smart thing to do at the time since Taylor seemed to have the vote tied up unless Britt changed his mind.

After the vote Monday morning, J.W. Hunt said it was the hardest vote he had cast since becoming a commissioner. Morgan affirmed the same sentiment. But J.W. Hunt said, "I have to go to church Sunday... and I have to answer to a higher power... a man's word is his bond."

Between the time the commitment was made to Britt and Monday morning, Herman Dial changed his mind. In a gathering in his office at the courthouse before the meeting began Monday morning, Dial informed the Commissioners that he would serve as chairman if he was nominated, an obvious sign that he had withdrawn from the pact with Britt, Hunt and Morgan.

It is being said that countless interested parties got into the act. Rev. Charles McDowell, a black minister and activist from Fairmont, is given a considerable amount of credit for leading the political pilgrimage to Britt as an antidote to H.T. Taylor. Rev. E.B. Turner, the black Lumberton City Councilman, is also mentioned as favoring Britt over Taylor for chairman. The Carl Britt scenario was acted out by Britt being named chairman Monday morning.

On the other side of the coin, Herman Dial said he was deluged with telephone calls prior to the meeting. Many supporters, like Saddletree's John Willie Oxendine, actively worked in his behalf. He was asked to keep his hat in the political ring.

And it all unraveled Monday morning. Bill Herndon nominated H.T. Taylor and H.T. Taylor refused to accept the nomination. He pulled out a statement which read, in part, "...until recently, I would have gladly accepted the nomination...but things have a way of changing...especially in politics..." Taylor complained, "...because of having lost earlier, definite and repeated commitments to my support, I must regrettably decline..."

After that, Bill Herndon turned around and nominated Herman Dial. At this point, Jack Morgan nominated Carl Britt.

Interestingly enough, Herndon and Taylor had both been sometimes even bitter enemies of Dial during his three year tenure as chairman. As the punster noted, "Politics make strange bed fellows." It is also rumored that there is little love lost between Britt and Taylor.

But, of course, racism still runs rampant in Ol' Robeson, as this newspaper noted in a front page editorial last week.

The politicking over the chairmanship's seat seemed to be a mere political aberration. It said a lot about politics and politicians in Ol' Robeson.

Some summations can be deduced. J.W. Hunt and Jack Morgan give more stock to the axiom, "A man's word is his bond" than Carl Britt does. They kept their word and voted for Britt in spite of intense pressure from supporters of Dial--mostly Indians. Carl Britt, the new chairman, did not keep his word. He reneged on his commitment to H.T. Taylor and, according to Herman Dial, had not lived up to other commitments he had made over the last few months.

And Herman Dial proved anew that he is one of the shrewdest politicians Robeson County has ever seen. He almost pulled it off. With Taylor and Herndon in his camp he only needed "one of the Indian votes to pull the chairmanship out of the fire," and he came up one vote short.

Herman Dial said, during a conference with myself, Morgan and Hunt following the vote, "You have to play politics by the rules. If a man breaks his word to me I am not bound to any commitment." Dial also noted that he had an obligation to those who wanted him to stay in the race. Morgan and Hunt asked Dial to "tell (me) what happened." Dial did not dispute the commitment the three had earlier made to Britt in lieu of H.T. Taylor.

Who was right? Herman Dial? Or Jack Morgan and J.W. Hunt? It is left to the reader to decide.

Maynor named Mayor Pro Tem



Glenn Maynor

Lumberton--Dr. E.B. Turner, who seconded the motion naming Indian Glenn Maynor Lumberton's Mayor Pro Tem said, "This makes history. Glenn Maynor is the first Indian to ever serve as mayor pro tem. That's a fine thing."

Glenn Maynor, 35, was elected unanimously. He is serving his second term and represents Precinct 7. Maynor said, "I love this city and I love serving on this city council."

Indian Caucus adopts North Robeson Parents Resolution

At the regular meeting of the Robeson County Indian Caucus Tuesday night, a resolution presented by the North Robeson Concerned Parents was adopted.

A presentation of the resolution and discussion of the goals of the NRCP was presented by Ms. Linda Hammonds, Chairperson, or the organization. The discussion revealed that the goal of the NRCP was a unitary school district in Robeson County.

It was the feeling of members of the Robeson County Indian Caucus that it is only fair that all children of Robeson County be afforded equal secondary educational opportunities and that this could more equally be obtained in a single school district for all of Robeson County.

In other business discussed, the group agreed that the two representatives to work with the Robeson County Commissioners on re-districting be Attorney Dexter Brooks and Chairman Lloyd Locklear.

The next meeting will be January 5, 1982 at a location to be announced later.

But one irrefutable fact remains from the fray. An Indian is no longer Chairman of the Robeson County Board of Commissioners.

Observers put in their two cents worth following the vote. Said one, "a man's word is more important than the color of his skin." Said another, "Should you make a pact with the enemy?" Another said, "If you lay down with dogs you'll get up with fleas." We offer no judgements on the above statements. We simply offer them as a sampling of comments following the vote.

But I liked J.W. Hunt's assessment best of all. He said, "My word is all I've got. And I mean to keep it." It seemed like he and Morgan were two of the few participants who did.

Following the vote for chairman, Sammy Cox was named vice-chairman and J.W. Hunt chaplain. County Attorney Joe "Pete" Ward and clerk Linda Hedgpeth were also retained in their posts unanimously.

JACOBS, HUNT & BROOKS RECEIVE OATH OF OFFICE

Pembroke--The first order of business was the swearing in of Mayor James A. "Pete" Jacobs and Councilmen Milton Hunt and Larry T. Brooks Monday night. The swearing in ceremonies, conducted by local magistrate Jerry Cummings, followed a series of protests by Councilman Sam Dial, who lost in a closely contested race to Jacobs, and Rev. Dawley Maynor, Chairman of Citizens for Better Government. Finally, after a protracted hearing and recount by the local board of elections, the election was upheld by the state board of elections.

After a range of congratulations and remarks by the winners, a short session was held.

Councilman Milton Hunt was elected as Mayor Pro Tem and Brooks was designated to represent the town with the local Lumbee River Council of Governments. The council then retained the services of Locklear, Brooks and

Jacobs as town attorneys and Ruby Smith as town clerk.

In other action, the council granted Jones Intercable a \$1.00 increase for their Cable TV Service, beginning the monthly rate to \$8.00 per customer.

The council also authorized two matters concerning the town's community development project: one would allow relocation fees to residents effected; the other allows repayment of \$2,500 erroneously over paid to the program.

The council then went into executive session to discuss unspecified matters with the town engineer, Don Jacobs, and the contractor involved in the road paving, curbing, etc. on the CD project. The council decided to meet again Friday at 5 p.m. concerning the matter.

Attorney Dexter Brooks also reviewed the Alfred Cook legal matter. A motion for dismissal is expected soon in the protracted matter.



Councilmen [l-r] Milton Hunt and Larry T. Brooks make it official as Magistrate Jerry Cummings read them their oath of office. [Bruce Barton photo]



Mayor James A. "Pete" Jacobs receives Cummings as Mrs. Mildred Jacobs, his wife, looks on. [Bruce Barton photo]

CHRISTMAS CANTATA SET FOR DEC. 16TH



Greetings during this Christmas season from the Lumbee Regional Development Association, Inc.'s Lumbee River Native American Center for the Arts. We wish the best for you and yours during this special season.

We hope you will be able to help celebrate this time of year with us. All of the Churches are especially invited, along with the whole community, to hear us sing the Cantata, "BORN A

KING" by John W. Peterson. In addition to the Cantata--this being the season to give--we will surprise you with additional gifts.

The place of the special program is the Performing Arts Center on the FSU Campus, Wednesday, December 16, 1981, at 7:30 p.m. To cover expenses for the rental of the building, there will be a \$1.00 admission fee for adults and 50 cents for children.

Come celebrate this Christmas with us.

Lowry Announces for the House



Bernard Lowry

Long time Pembroke businessman Bernard Lowry has announced his intention to seek a seat in the North Carolina General Assembly.

In addition to his many business interests in the Pembroke area, Lowry has completed 37 1/2 years in the teaching field. He has served for nearly five years as a Magistrate with the 16th Judicial District of the N.C. Judicial System.

Lowry's civic contributions include serving as past president of the Pembroke Kiwanis Club; Lt. Governor elect for the Kiwanis District, including 29 clubs. He is a member of Pembroke First Methodist Church where he has served as teacher of the Adult Sunday School for 15 years. He is a past president of the Pembroke Chamber of Commerce. He served as a member of Boy Scout Troop #27 for 20 years and served 10 years as chairman. Lowry is also a veteran of World War II.

Mr. and Mrs. Lowry have a family of four children: Bernard Lowry, Jr. who is a captain in the U.S. Navy; Joan who is librarian at Pembroke Junior High School; Lillian Rose who is in business in Charlotte, NC; and Gary who is employed with LOF in Laurinburg, NC.

In making his announcement, Lowry released the following statement: "It is my desire to do well, and if elected, I shall endeavor to represent every voter of our district."

West Robeson School bids scheduled

The Robeson County Board of Education met in regular session Tuesday evening. They announced that bid opening date for West Robeson would be January 26, 1982 at 3:00 p.m. in the Board Room.

James Sampson, director of driver education for the county system, reported to the board on his program. He said that the course includes 54 hours of instruction. "The aim," he said, "is to prepare students to operate a motor vehicle with minimum problems..." He stated that East Carolina University, A & T University and Appalachian offer full certification in driver education.

Wilbur Smith also reported on the new Industrial Arts program at Pembroke Junior High. He introduced Charlie Hartwell, instructor, who told the board the various projects that were undertaken in the class. Industrial Arts teach the technical aspects of industry, problem solving, creativity, etc.

Mr. Albert C. Hunt, assistant superintendent, announced his retirement effective December 31, 1981. Supt. Purnell Swett said, "Mr. Hunt has added a certain balance here...you have a way of saying things that need to be said at the appropriate time... We are certainly going to miss you."

Mr. Hunt addressed the board briefly. Said he, "I have enjoyed working here. We have a good board and a good staff. I have seen a lot improvement take place...It is easy to preach, but when you put it into practice, that's where the problem comes in...I want you all to remember what the schools are built for and who they belong to...The man who holds the cat by the tail gets more excitement than the fellow who just looks on."

Supt. Swett said that he would not immediately name a replacement for Hunt. "I want to delay that to some future date to reassess the situation... there are cuts expected in federal programs for next year, possibly as much as 27 percent...That will require a complete assessment of many of our programs...As always, I am going to do what is best for boys and girls in our school system."