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"Building Communicative Bridges In A Tri-Racial Setting"

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Newly established housing Commission brings change to public housing

On November 1, 1989 Pembroke Redevelopment Commission formed as a result of a resolution passed by the Pembroke Town Council. The resolution abolished the Pembroke Housing Authority and Redevelopment Commission and replaced it with a new corporation which was named Pembroke Redevelopment Commission. The new board was then appointed by the entire Pembroke Town Council. Previously all housing commissioners had been appointed by the Mayor of Pembroke. The new Commissioners are: Janell Oxendine, chairperson, who was appointed by Henry W. Oxendine; Lae Ruth Mabe, vice chairperson, who was appointed by Mayor Milton Hunt; Hardy Bell, appointed by Vernon Oxendine; Carol Paul, appointed by Larry T. Brooks; and Samuel Kerns, appointed by Harry Oxendine.

The past eleven months have been busy ones for the Commission. The members are now in the process of making some administrative changes and charting a new direction for public housing in Pembroke. A retreat workshop is planned for October to formalize the new direction. In keeping with the Memorandum of Understanding between Secretary Jack Kemp of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Secretary Louis W. Sullivan of the Department of Health and Human Services, it is the desire of the Pembroke Redevelopment Commission to implement the suggested Resident Initiatives and Youth Sports-Cultural Programs. The commission has set goals of economic empowerment, drug free neighborhoods, home ownership, educational literacy and job training for residents in public housing. There will be needs assessments conducted which will involve residents through resident councils, establish on-site day care for

mothers in need of job training and or literacy training, encourage entrepreneurialship, home ownership and resident involvement in ridding the neighborhoods of illegal drug use and abuse.

The Commission has voted to accept a proposal by Robeson Community College to lease the former day care center at Strickland Heights. RCC will act as the responsible agent in coordinating various programs along the above lines for persons in the community. Public housing residents will receive priority when it comes to program participation. Currently the proposal is in the Greensboro office of HUD and the commission is eagerly awaiting the lease agreement. RCC will also help with coordinating other agencies as they commit to help with the stated goals. It is hoped that the Department of Social Services will work closely with the commission in providing job training and employment-search help for mothers on AFDC.

The effects of the changes in Public Housing in Pembroke has already been measured by a decrease in police calls to public housing sites. The commission has developed a close cooperative working relationship with Chief Larry Roberts and his staff at the Pembroke Police Department. It is hoped that the effects of the change will also be noticed in the public schools in the Pembroke area.

The change that is being implemented will result in more accountability on the part of the Commission, administrative staff, and the residents. Persons in the Pembroke area who have constructive criticism, comments and or suggestions are urged and encouraged to contact the staff at the central office in Locklear Court. (Submitted by the Pembroke Redevelopment Commission)

now held by Conrad Oxendine, Route 2, Box 182, Maxton, North Carolina.

Earlier this month, Bradford Oxendine, H. E. Edward, Herbert Clark and Conrad Oxendine were renominated for their board seats by LREMC Nominating Committee. Clark, of Route 3, Box 310, Laurinburg, North Carolina represents District 9, which contains all of Scotland County. He faces no opposition at this time.

An election to fill the four seats on the 12-member board will be held Tuesday, October 16, during the electric cooperative's Annual Meeting of Members. The meeting will take place at Pembroke State University's Givens Performing Art Center. It begins at 7 p.m., with registration starting at 4:30 p.m. In honor of the co-op's 50th anniversary, members will be served hot dogs and drinks, and a health fair and high voltage demonstrations will be held during the registration period. Registration prizes of caps and visors will be given members, and they will be eligible to win over fifty door prizes.

Entertainment will be by Pembroke State University's Singers and Swingers and by the Sujette Ensemble of Maxton.

During the Annual Meeting, additional nominations may be made from the floor. All candidates must live in the districts they would represent and meet other eligibility requirements.

Directors of Lumbee River EMC are elected to three-year terms. Four seats come up for election each year.

Lumbee River EMC provides electric power to nearly 28,000 homes and businesses in Robeson, Scotland, Hoke and Cumberland counties. Consumers who receive electric power from LREMC are members of the cooperative and have the right to vote at the Annual Meeting.

Crowned Miss NASO



Estelita (Missy) Vye Lowry of Pembroke, a sophomore at Pembroke State University majoring in English Education, was selected September 20, as "Miss Native American Student Organization" at PSU for the 1990-91 academic year.

Chosen "Miss Lumbee" for 1989-90, Miss Lowry comes from a traditional PSU family. Both her mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. James Earl Lowry, graduated from PSU, and her sister, Edwina, will graduate from PSU next May.

Miss Lowry's prizes for winning included \$100, a crown, a beaded crown, a trophy, flowers, the traditional Eagle Feather which is passed down from one queen to the next, and a new gift—a shawl with PSU embroidered on it. She will also be the Native American Student Organization's entry in the "Miss Pembroke State University Scholarship Pageant" in November.

First runner-up in the "Miss NASO" pageant was Leslie Joy Woods, a sophomore who is the daughter of Mr and Mrs. Donald Woods of the Prospect community. Second runner-up was Melanie Strickland, a senior who is the daughter of Mrs. Herbie Locklear of Fairmont and the late Earl Strickland.

The new "Miss NASO" was an '89 graduate of West Robeson High School where she was a member of the National Honor Society, among the top 15 in her graduating class, a cheerleader, a member of the chorus and winner of the Spanish award. At PSU, she has won admissions and alumni scholarships and represented PSU at the National Youth Conference at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., last summer.

The "Miss NASO" pageant consisted of evening gown, talent and interview competition. Miss Lowry's talent was singing with a rendition of "The Power of Love," by Jennifer Rush.

"I am very proud to be chosen 'Miss Native American Student Organization,'" she said. "I look forward to representing our organization at powwows throughout the state and at the Indian Unity Conference in March." She believes the experience she gained as a former "Miss Lumbee" will help her in such endeavors.

A member of Bear Swamp Baptist Church near Pembroke, she says her hobbies are singing, dancing and traveling. For a career, she wants to teach.

Consumers petition for LREMC Board

Five members of Lumbee River Electric Membership Corporation have filed petitions to run for seats on the LREMC board of directors.

The five are Robert L. Strickland, Route 3, Box 178, Lumberton; Elias Rogers, Route 1, Box C-94, Red Springs; Elizabeth T. Cole, Route 1, Box 185-E, Red Springs; Etta B. Jones, Route 2, Box 296, Pembroke, N.C.; and Bobby Locklear, Route 2, Box 225-A, Maxton, N.C.

Strickland will contest the District 3 seat now held by Bradford Oxendine, Route 4, Box 854, Lumberton, N.C. District 3 contains the townships of Back Swamp, Smyrna, Britts, Wisharts, Raft Swamp and Lumberton.

Rogers will run for the District 7 seat now held by H.E. Edwards, P.O. Box 425, Maxton, N.C. District 7 contains all of Hoke County west of N.C. 211. Cole, Jones and Locklear will contest the at-large seat

SAY YOU READ IT IN THE CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE

Mobile Press Register Sunday, Sept. 9, 1990

Lumbees have mysterious past

By E. RANDALL FLOYD

European settlers pushing inland along the rugged Lumber River in the 18th century were surprised to discover a tribe of English-speaking Indians who dressed like white frontiersmen and lived in remarkably comfortable houses.

Even more astounding was the way many of these strange "savages" looked. Although most had dark skins, a few were fair-complexioned and had blond hair and blue eyes. Some could even read, claiming that white gods had long ago taught their ancestors how to "talk in books," which, the explorers understood, meant to read and write.

Today, the descendants of that mysterious group of people are known as the Lumbees, and they still inhabit the same harsh region of North Carolina where they were discovered more than two centuries ago. Since they were one of the largest groups of Indians in the United States, it is ironic that few people outside the states of North Carolina and Virginia have ever heard of them.

The reason, according to scholars, is that at some time in the remote past, the Lumbees apparently lost their own language and cultural identity. While cultural and linguistic traditions continued to flourish among better known southeastern tribes, such as the Cherokee, Choctaws and Creeks, the heritage of the Lumbees became obscure.

Where were these blue-eyed Indians, and how did their ancestors learn to "talk in books?" One intriguing theory is that the estimated 40,000 modern Lumbees are descended from the survivors of Sir Walter Raleigh's lost colony of Roanoke, which vanished without a trace in 1589 along with more than 100 men, women and children.

The settlement was the brainchild of Sir Walter Raleigh, a dashing, daring and somewhat reckless consort of Queen Elizabeth who, along with his older brother — Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a famed explorer and soldier of fortune — sought adventure and wealth in the newly discovered lands beyond the great sea. In 1584 Raleigh asked for and received a charter to explore the southern coast of the New World, with the intention of setting up a buffer colony in the path of advancing Spanish settlers. Raleigh's reconnoitering force made landfall 2,000 miles south of Newfoundland and spent the next month exploring the dark, unfriendly coast south of Chesapeake Bay.

One year later, Raleigh outfitted an expedition to settle Roanoke Island, a remote wooded isle near the present boundary between Virginia and North Carolina. The settlement failed, however, mainly because of the colonists' preoccupation with finding gold rather than tending fields. Unfriendly natives also influenced their decision to abandon the colony that summer and return to England by hitching a ride with Sir Francis Drake, fresh from piratical raids in the West Indies.

In spite of tremendous personal financial losses with the first expedition, Raleigh was determined to send another group of colonists, this time about 140 persons under the command of John White, who in time would become famous for his early drawings of colonial life in North America.

White spent about a month getting the new settlement started, then returned to England for fresh supplies. Among the settlers he left behind were his daughter, her husband, and their newborn daughter, Virginia Dare — believed to be the first child of European parents born in the New World.

Before departing, he left strict instructions that should the remaining colonists be forced to leave the settlement in his absence, they were to inscribe their destination in a "conspicuous place."

As fate would have it, war broke out with Spain later that year and White was unable to return to the colony on schedule. The entire Spanish fleet

had attacked England, forcing every available ship into military service. Not until 1590 — two years later — was the war-weary governor able to return to the settlement, 3,000 miles away from the bloody battlefields and bays of Europe.

It was a grim sight that awaited White upon his arrival at Roanoke. Not only had the settlement been ransacked and destroyed, the entire population had vanished — every man, woman and child, including his daughter and baby granddaughter.

In vain, the grief-stricken governor searched the island for signs of their fate. The only clue to the whereabouts of the settlers was a single word carved into a wooden post — "Croatan."

White finally decided that the colonists must have abandoned Roanoke when supplies ran out and made their way to nearby Hatteras. Although he conducted a limited search for the settlers, bad weather and pressing royal obligations back in England forced him to leave fairly soon.

Why he never returned or at least ordered a full-scale investigation into the colonists disappearance has never been fully explained.

Historians still argue over the meaning of "Croatan." That was the name of an island south of Roanoke, known to have been inhabited by the friendly Hatteras tribe. Nevertheless, some researchers believe it was the name of an Indian tribe that attacked the settlement and killed the colonists. They say that after the massacre the settlers may have been cannibalized, since no trace of their bones or belongings were ever found.

Other experts theorize that most of the settlers probably starved to death or died of unknown diseases. Hostile Indians could have done away with any survivors, or simply carried off some of the women and children into slavery.

Charles Hudson, a University of Georgia anthropologist and author of "The Southeastern Indians," suggests that Roanoke's settlers simply joined up with a local Indian tribe in order to survive. Still others speculate they were hauled off by pirates — even though there were no known pirates operating in those waters at the time.

A number of scholars believe it is possible that the survivors of Roanoke reached the Croatan island and intermarried with the Hatteras. This is the most reasonable explanation for the sudden disappearance of the Roanoke settlers, the one most widely accepted by historians of that period, and the one held by Governor White at the time.

Researchers studying the modern Lumbees point to that group's blue eyes, blond hair and fair complexions as lingering proof of their ancestral contact with the Europeans at Roanoke. The Lumbees themselves insist they are descended from the Roanoke Colony, and there is additional evidence to indicate their claim might be justified.

Of the 95 surnames of the lost colonist of Roanoke — names such as Sampson, Cooper and Dare — no fewer than 41 can be found among the Lumbees.

Starting in about 1650, many Hatteras Indians migrated to the mainland, settling in the Lumber River Valley. And when the first whites reached the wild hinterlands of the Lumber River swamps in the late 18th century, the Indians they encountered wore handsome, European type clothing, lived in multi-room dwellings, and were familiar with the English language.

They were also familiar with whiskey and displayed drinking habits hauntingly reminiscent of 16th century Europeans. When asked to identify themselves, these Indians said they were "Croatan" the same Governor White had found carved on the wooden palisade in 1590.

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