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CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE

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Robeson County

"Building communicative bridges in a tri-racial setting"

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Whatever Happened to ... Lottie Emanuel Chavis

By Barbara Braveboy-Locklear

SPECIAL TO THE CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE

For 69 years Lottie Emanuel Chavis longed to revisit her native Bullock County, GA. Yet, she declined invitations for free transportation from relatives traveling from Robeson County, NC to Adabelle, GA.

"I just didn't go," she comments. Then in the summer of 1988, the petite 87-year-old learned of a planned tour of the area for the coming fall. She was among the first to sign on for the trip.

On Nov. 19, 1988, Mrs. Chavis placed her feet on land she'd not walked on since she was a 16-year-old in 1919. "I was kinda disappointed upon visiting my birthplace because all the homes I once knew no longer existed," she says. "Yet, I knew things would have to change over 60-some years." Signs of Mt. Zion Baptist Church where she once worshipped and attended school as a child no longer existed. There was, however, one landmark she found familiar - a cemetery where Croatan (Lumbee) Indians lie buried.

Until 1987, the Croatan Indian Memorial Cemetery went un-noticed except for when a descendant of the dead families buried there occasionally visited the site located on a sloping pastureside.

"My visit to the cemetery was very emotional as I recalled memories of beloved ones buried there," the Lumbee softly adds. She says most of the graves there are of very young children who were victims of an influenza epidemic in the early 1900's. For the octogenarian the visit was a time to reminisce...

It was during the late 1800's that her parents, Edward James Emanuel, a Sampson County native, and his wife, Margaret Hammonds Emanuel heard of employment opportunities in the turpentine industry around the Claxton, GA area. The couple gathered together their two daughters and household belongings and settled in Adabelle. Soon thereafter other families from Robeson County moved to the rural area. The Robeson County Indians were known then as Croatans. They quickly established themselves and built Mt. Zion Baptist Church, a one room wooden building. There they worshipped and attended school; grades 1-7. As the all-Indian enrollment grew, teachers were recruited from Robeson County among whom were William Henry Oxendine and Ervin Spaulding.

Employed by Adabelle Trading Company, "E.J." Emanuel quickly established himself as an accomplished cooper, making wooden barrels for turpentine. By then the Emanuel children numbered three sons; six daughters.

"I was the baby and was always puny and a bit spoiled," Mrs. Chavis laughs. "The Indian families engaged in farming crops of cotton, corn and peanuts. My daddy didn't raise tobacco until one or two years before we moved back to North Carolina."

Like most of the Indian children, Mrs. Chavis attended school during three-month sessions. "We'd gear up the mules and take a wagon into neighboring Statesboro to buy our school books. All the children studied together in the one-room church/school building, so we only bought one book per subject. The books were shared among the children of each family." Slate boards served as writing pads.

After completing the seventh grade, Mrs. Chavis was appointed by community people and approved by Bullock County School superintendent to teach at the Indian school. At age 18, she took control of students in grades 1-3. Among her students was her beloved niece, Mary Locklear, daughter of her oldest sister Louvenia, and husband, Jasper Locklear.

"That's why I say today I'm not old. Why! I have neices and nephews just four years younger than I," she interjects. "I remember babysitting these children who feel like my brothers and sisters."

Mrs. Chavis says she remembers gatherings with community people and family alongside riverbanks in Adabelle to enjoy fish fries and picnics. Another favorite pastime was that of watching the daily freight train stop at a nearby trading company to deliver supplies. A rare treat for the community children was a train ride into Claxton; while a weekly treat was that of taking a mule-driven wagon into town for necessary personal supplies.

In 1919, Mrs. Chavis was the lone unmarried child of "E.J." and Margaret Emanuel. In the spring of that year the Emanuel family made the hard decision to move back to Robeson County. "Mama's parents were getting on in age, and she wanted to move back to be near them," Mrs. Chavis says. "Most of the other Indian families had already left for Robeson County. We were among the very last ones to leave Adabelle."

Once the decision was announced by the patriarch, his married children decided to relocate as well. Jointly they chartered three freight train box cars for shipping of their household belongings, food supplies and farm grain. By fall's coming all cars were filled. Cows and goats were sold, but the two Emanuel mules were shipped.

Arriving in Robeson County, the families engaged in farming - mostly settling in the Saddletree community. Mrs. Chavis enrolled at Cherokee Indian Normal School in Pembroke where she became a sometime boarding student; sometime commuting student. Upon completing the eighth grade, she was recruited to teach at the all-Indian Shiloh School in Sampson County, NC. There she taught grades 1-7 in a one-room building and was paid \$25 per month from which she paid room and board. When her one-term teaching assignment ended, she returned to the Indian Normal School and was given a



one-year credit for teaching and was promoted to tenth grade. She completed high school (11 grades) and during summer months was able to complete one year of a two-year teaching certificate program before dropping out to care for her aging parents and to marry the 30-year-old bachelor she'd courted for several years.

So it was at age 27, Lottie Emanuel Chavis eloped to Dillon, SC to marry Normie Chavis. "I didn't slip away and get married. I just walked away," she says coyly. The couple didn't formally announce their marriage. They just went to the groom's home and took up housekeeping and farming in the Saddletree community. It was there they lived together for 49 years. They remained childless. Mr. Chavis died in 1980. Mrs. Chavis says she never regretted not getting her teaching certificate. After marriage, she substituted as a teacher at Magnolia School.

She still resides in the same community. She says failing health keeps her pretty much confined to home where her beloved 13-year-old dog, Pee Wee, keeps her company.

Six years ago after suffering a heart attack she retired from teaching Sunday School at Bethel Hill Baptist Church. There she'd taught for 50 years and served as secretary to the church's Women's Missionary Union. Today she busies herself in attending meetings with the Saddletree Senior Citizens Club; producing hand crocheted items, reading and taking care of her many flowering box plants.

"Lord, I love flowers. Since my heart attack I can't hoe and dig around them in the yard. So I just put them in planters and pots on my porch and in my home," she comments.

A proud moment came for Mrs. Chavis in the summer of 1988 when the Lumbee Homecoming committee appointed her Co-Grand Marshal for its homecoming parade.

Ten thousand people gathered in Pembroke Town Park that sultry morning to wave to her, Mrs. Nita Locklear and Mr. Oscar Chavis who were Grand Marshals. There, attired in her ever-present bonnet, she sat on a float. She says while feeling pride in the moment, she didn't feel the least old because the lady sitting next to her was 99 years old, and the gentleman was 96. "I didn't feel old. Not at all."

Eastern Carolina Tuscarora Nation to Re-Enroll All Members

BY Mike Dunn

The Eastern Carolina Tuscarora Nation will begin to re-enroll all former members as well as anyone who would like to become a member. The enrollment process begins Friday night, Feb. 1, 1991 at 7:30 p.m. and will continue every Friday until March 3, 1991 in the Nation's meeting house, located between Island Grove Church on Highway 710 and the Old Red Springs-Maxton Road (State Road 1303) on the Nation's Sovereign Territory.

Each individual who is being re-enrolled or enrolled will receive not only an enrollment number on their card but also a clan number. They will receive a clan number through a genealogical process which traces them back to one of the seven Tuscarora Clans: Bear, Wolf, Turtle, Deer, Beaver, Snake, and Eel.

The Eastern Carolina Tuscarora Nation through the "Great Law of Peace" which is the official Law of the Nation and through the "Longhouse" which has now been built and established on the Sovereign Territory is recalling all former enrollment cards. These cards are the ones which were certified by the Six Nations in New York and Canada back in the 70's. Everyone who has one of these cards and fails to come in and re-enroll will have their cards void and their names removed from the

enrollment book. This new system will clarify the confusion that exists in North Carolina on who represents the Tuscarora Nation in dealing with the Six Nations and the foreign governments of the United States and Canada.

The Eastern Carolina Tuscarora Nation will be using a screening system to screen each individual who comes in to enroll or re-enroll and the Nation has the right to reject or accept anyone who is enrolling.

The time limit for re-enrolling or enrolling will be 30 days from Feb. 1, 1991 and ending March 3, 1991. Those who live out of state and are unable to come in to re-enroll or enroll can come in at a later time with proof of out of state residency status.

For additional information call 919-521-4955 or write the Eastern Carolina Tuscarora Nation, Route 3 Box 226, Maxton, NC 28564. This article is sanctioned by the Traditional Chiefs and Clan Mothers of the Eastern Carolina Tuscarora Nation and through the self help programs that exist and are sponsored through the nation.

News from Piney Grove School

The second grade class of Mrs. Melba Oxendine and Mrs. Maria Bullock observed National Hat Day recently. This day falls on the third Friday in January each year. Activities relating to this day included a discussion on the origin of hats, different styles of hats, and the three reasons for wearing hats, protection, decoration and communication.

Certificates of participation were awarded to each student wearing a hat. Special certificates were given to Lauren Tyner and Steven Callahan for the largest hats; Lacy Carter and Hilda Locklear for the ugliest hats; Natasha Oxendine and Shaun Lewis for the prettiest hats; Daniel Brewer and Angela Bruce for the funniest hats; and Addidas McNair and Ryan Bell for the smallest hats.



An all day staff development reading workshop was held in the school cafeteria on January 17, 1991. Annie Evans, Early Childhood Supervisor, Kathy Sullivan, PSU educator and Cathy Maples, Robeson County Schools Supervisor, shared this most rewarding experience.

Involved activities included: sharing of personal materials, reading aloud, make and take and vocabulary instruction. This was an on going workshop associated with Piney Grove's school improvement plan.

LOCAL HAPPENINGS



Shown above are recent winners at Hammer Down Speedway in the 4-wheeler class. On the left is second place winner Bill Lauer of Charleston, SC. Pictured on the right is first place winner Mitch McFayden of Furkton, NC. McFayden was also the Dash for Cash winner.

Hammer Down Speedway, located next to Thunder Valley on Old Lowry Road in Red Springs, features 4-wheeler racing action every other Saturday, with special children's classes. The next racing series will be held February 9, with gates opening at 4 p.m. and racing at 6 p.m. The Public is encouraged to come out and join in the fun.

THE COACH'S CORNER

By Ken Johnson

PSU GREEN GRASS LESSON

The parking lot and the little police station have been removed and as we came out of the Upward Bound building we saw this nice winter rye grassing quadrangle, the Ira Pate-Reba Lowry clock on the right and the basketball and two tennis courts. And Tommy Swett of the Upward Bound program smiling greeted us. Doris, JoLynn Johnson, my brother's daughter to be Doris' guardian in case anything happens to me. The overwhelming euphoria of such peace was really a lesson, the grassy quadrangle, students can experience for years to come. Gone is the hassle to find parking here and double parking that I had to do to get to the post office and the sight of the idea that police protection is or has to be the central idea since the little station is moved off to the side. Their protection will always be needed since some people never learn even in a fine environment of the new grassy quadrangle.

The courts will always teach that the summa of life is happiness, not necessarily winning. The pick up games. The camaradry the courts engendered cannot be bought. The games without referees can't be beat for obeying the rules on your own. The tennis games where you use your own honor to call the balls in or out also teach the grassy green lesson of sportmanship.

So much thanks should go to Dr. Joe Oxendine and his staff for preserving the green grassy lesson of PSU's new quadrangle of peace.

Ken Johnson

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PAC CELEBRATES 'BLACK HISTORY MONTH' WITH MUSICAL, 'QUEEN OF THE BLUES'

PBU's Performing Arts Center will celebrate "Black History Month" with a musical, "Queen of the Blues," Friday, Feb. 1, at 8 p.m. This recreation of the life of Dinah Washington is sponsored in part by Dickinson Buick Dodge of Fayetteville.

Theresa Hightower will perform as Dinah Washington, whose memorable songs included "What a Difference a Day Makes," "This Bitter Earth," and "I Don't Hurt Anymore."

For more information or reservations, telephone the PAC at 821-0778 or call toll free at 1-800-367-0778.