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Lumbee Bill Hearing Postponed

The Congressional Hearing on Lumbee Recognition to be held at PSU's Chavis Center has been postponed. The hearing should be rescheduled within the next several weeks.

According to Ruth Locklear, Director of Tribal Enrollment, major bills are pending in the Congress and the Congressmen must be in attendance.

MEDIA CENTER NAMED FOR EPPS

The dedication of the Magnolia School media center was held Sunday afternoon, May 26, at the school. The center has been named the Frank H. Epps Media Center as a tribute to Mr. Epps, beloved principal from 1933-68.

Noah Woods, principal, presided and introduced the participants. Aileen Holmes, a member of the school board; and Bill Herndon, county commissioner, spoke of the appropriateness of such a dedication. Major David R. Green, chairman of the school board, read the

proclamation from the plaque then presented it to Lena Epps Brooker, daughter of Mr. Epps. Adeline Maynor, former teacher and close associate of Mr. Epps, spoke of his admirable qualities as a person and as an educator. Following the prayer of dedication by Rev. Earney Hammonds, Ms. Brooker gave an intimate tribute to her "daddy" - as she referred to her father.

A reception was held in the media center following the dedication.

Boss of the Year

Dr. Earlena Lowery, Director of Certified Personnel for the Public Schools of Robeson County, was honored as Boss of the Year during the PSRC Educational Office Personnel banquet last week. She received a plaque and roses. Ms. Sally Mitchell, payroll, was named E.O.P. of the Year and also received roses and a plaque.



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

BENEFIT GOSPEL SING PLANNED

A benefit gospel sing for Jubilee House Ministry of the Robeson County Church and Community Center will be held Saturday, June 15 at Lumberton Junior High School on Marion Road in Lumberton. The event will begin at 6 p.m. and last until 9 p.m. Free admission. The sing will feature James Mason and Voices of Faith from Georgia, the Lumber River Quartet, the McNeills, the Cummings Family and the Happy Echoes.

SELECTED FOR NC SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATH

Jody Allen Cummings son of Rev. Michael and Quase Cummings of Pembroke and Dwayne Allen Locklear, son of Milton and Freda Locklear of Pembroke were selected to attend the N.C. School of Science and Mathematics. The school, located in Durham, is a public residential high school for students of exceptional ability and potential in science and mathematics. Students apply and are selected during their tenth grade year for enrollment in the 11th and 12th grades.

Admission to the school is based on grades and test scores, writing samples, special talents and accomplishments, an interview, and evidence of commitment to learning. Jody and Dwayne were selected because they are outstanding students at Fumell Swett High School.

STRIKE AT THE WIND ART DINNER AND AUCTION FUNDRAISER PLANNED

The outdoor drama "Strike at the Wind" will hold its annual Art Dinner and Auction Fundraiser on July 2, 1991 at the Chavis University Center in Pembroke State University. A reception for featured artist Ellis Sampson will begin at 5:30 p.m. Dinner will begin at 7 p.m. Area

artists will have art on display and for sale. Tickets are \$25 per person and \$50 per couple. For more information, please call SATW at 919-521-3112.

STRIKE AT THE WIND BEGINS JULY 6

The outdoor drama "Strike at the Wind" begins its 16th production season July 6, 1991 and continues through August 24, 1991. Performances are Thursday through Saturday beginning at 8:30 p.m. at the Adolph Dial Amphitheater located on the grounds of the North Carolina Indian Cultural Center in Pembroke. Pre-show cabaret begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$7 adults, \$5 senior citizens, and \$4 for children. Groups of ten or more receive \$2 off regular ticket prices. For more information or reservations, please call 919-521-3112.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL BEGINS

Vacation Bible School will be held at Cherokee Chapel Holiness Methodist Church on Monday, June 10-Friday, June 14 from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. Theme will be "Animals Presenting the Gospel." VBS will also feature Aunt Millie, the ventriloquist, and Sunshine.

The church is located off Highway 71 between Red Springs and Maxton, across the road from Oxendine School.

Rev. Julian Ransom cordially invites everyone to attend.

BAKE SALE AND CAR WASH

A bake sale and car wash will be held at Cherokee Chapel Holiness Methodist Church on Saturday, June 8 from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. The church is located off Highway 71 between Red Springs and Maxton, across from Oxendine School. The public is encouraged to come and support the youth.

BECAUSE IT IS RIGHT

Testimony Recommending The U.S. Government Recognize The Lumbee

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following testimony will be given by Dr. Stanley Knick, Director of PSU's Native American Resource Center, before the Congressional Hearing for Lumbee Recognition.

Native American people now trace their historical and genealogical records back into early Colonial times. Again, there is no gap in the record.

A third important thing revealed in the archaeological record of Robeson County concerns the number of sites, and what that part of the record indicates about the size of the pre-contact Native American population. In 1987 and 1988, the Native American Resource Center, Pembroke State University, conducted an archaeological reconnaissance survey of the county (Knick, 1988). Despite the fact that less than one percent of the county was examined (3,500 of 607,104 acres), 314 previously unrecorded archaeological sites were documented. This means that sites were encountered at a density rate of one site per every eleven acres, a very dense distribution. All of this tells us that Robeson County was heavily utilized by Native Americans, and that the pre-contact population must have been quite sizeable. Not only have Indians always been here, enjoying cultural influences from elsewhere in an apparently uninterrupted occupation, but there were a great many of them, too.

One argument against Lumbee recognition is based on the assertion that the word "Lumbee" itself is an invented word. Some people take this assumption from the fact that the U.S. government first formally accepted the word in 1956. But this is far from the whole story. Several writers around the turn of the present century recorded that the original name of the Lumber River was Lumbee River (i.e., McMillan, 1888; McPherson, 1915). These writers were reporting what they were told by elders of the day, thus extending the real name of the Lumbee River back beyond recorded memory or history.

McPherson, an Indian agent for the U.S. government assigned to assess the tribal rights of the Indians of Robeson County, explained the connection between the name of the Indians and the name of the river: "While the word Lumbee is not found in the Handbook (the Lumber River was anciently called the Lumbee) it is probably of the same origin. The Lumbee River is a branch of the Pedee and the similarity of the names would suggest the same origin. All these small Siouan tribes were originally parts of, or confederated with, the Cheraws (1915:23)."

If Lumbee is the original name of the river along which the people lived who left their archaeological sites, then it is reasonable to conclude that Lumbee was also the original name of the people as well. This is especially true in light of the fact that several other Eastern Siouan tribes or nations living nearby also shared their names with the rivers along which they lived (i.e., Santee, Wateree, Congaree, Sugaree, etc.). The people were always here; their occupation was uninterrupted; there were a great many of them; and the word for the river was Lumbee.

As the effects of European colonization swept across the Carolinas, almost everything in Robeson County changed. The population changed. Language changed. Culture changed. But some things did not change—one was the will of the people to hold onto their Indian identity; another was the word, sometimes unspoken but never forgotten, Lumbee.

The population changed. Prior to the coming of Europeans, there were a great many Native American people living in Robeson County. This is indicated by the number of late Woodland archaeological sites which have already been documented in survey of only one percent of the land. But European diseases such as smallpox quickly moved in epidemic fashion across that land.

John Lawson, who travelled extensively among the Indians of the Carolinas, estimated in 1705 that the Native population had been reduced in epidemics by 5/6th (83%)

everywhere within 200 miles of white settlements (Lawson, 1709). This would mean all Indians between Charleston, South Carolina, and Jamestown, Virginia, including those in the Robeson County area. By 1738, similar population decimation by epidemics had reached all the way to the Cherokee in the mountains (Adair, 1775).

As colonial conquest continued, the usual last resort of many declining tribes was to coalesce with the remnants of other tribes in isolated areas. One such area was the land of the Lumbee, in what came to be known to the Indians of the early 1800's as "The Settlement" (Evans, 1971).

Language changed. Situated as it was near the geographical interface of three language families (Algonquian, Iroquoian, and Siouan; Phelps, 1983), "the Settlement" was a place where people speaking different languages came together. As small remnant groups, sometimes as few as a single extended family, came to "the Settlement," old language barriers began to melt away. With only a few members of the group left after the massive epidemics, languages themselves disappeared.

Encouraged by the desire not to have to learn the language of a former enemy (such as a Siouan speaker learning an Iroquoian language); encouraged by missionaries who promised the Indians a God who would protect the people from epidemic diseases; encouraged by the need to trade with Europeans for goods only available in the European's language, the people of "the Settlement" quickly adopted English. It became, as they say in West Africa, the *lingua franca*, the common language of trade.

In the process, all that would remain of the Lumbee language was the word itself: Lumbee. By the mid-1700's when non-Indians came to Robeson County to stay, the Indians were already speaking a kind of broken English (at least they spoke it to their new European neighbors) (Dial and Eliades, 1975).

Culture changed. A part of the acculturation process for Native Americans all over the "New World" was the gradual, and in some cases rapid, disappearance of the outward elements of culture. Many of these things are what Americans think of as being all there is to Indian culture: clothing, dance, language, architecture, and so on. In Robeson County during the Colonial period, a great many of these external cultural elements vanished from sight because it was safer to get along with the dominant white culture without them.

Especially following the Tuscarora and Cheraw Wars, and the other Indian wars preceding the Revolution, simply being an Indian was dangerous. Indians were killed or driven off their lands just for being non-white; for being in the way of "progress." Thus finding a place where other Indian people were gathered—a geographically isolated place where there was a sense of community, of togetherness, of Indian culture—was very important. And there is much more to culture than its external elements.

When the Scots came to Robeson County for the duration, the Indians already had many European trade goods, including metal tools, and were going about the business of making a living for their families as farmers. They had been farmers before the white men came, and they could keep a living right along if given the chance. Some elements of the old culture did not change much.

One of the traditional elements of culture which did not change is that sense of personal and community identity to which Lumbee people have so fiercely held. They have always known they were Indians. Whenever people from the outside world came to visit or to stay, it was always

with the knowledge that these people were Indians in their hearts and in their outlook. The elders knew. They taught the children.

Another element of traditional culture which survives today is the great importance of kinship. It is very common to find several generations of Lumbee people living in close proximity, on the same land or "home place." Within this extended family, there is a network of sharing; a support base. Extremely few Lumbee people go hungry or homeless for long, because there is always someone to whom they can turn; some part of the kinship network on which they can depend.

Another surviving element of traditional culture is the central role of spirituality. One of the first things noticed by European travellers in the "New World" was the great importance of religion. This traditional kind of spirituality can not easily be separated from the other, more commonplace, elements of culture. Church is not only pervasive amongst the Lumbee as a spiritual matter; it defines social and economic matters, and influences political matters. Despite the fact that Christianity replaced traditional religion during the conquest, spirituality itself continues to be an integral part of the Lumbee universe.

Yet another element of traditional culture which survives today is found in the realm of health. There are still a great many Lumbee people, especially elders, who have knowledge of herbal remedies passed down for generations. John Lawson noted (1709) that sassafras was an extremely common treatment amongst the Indians of the Carolinas; as recently as 1986 a study of health among a large sample of Lumbee people revealed that sassafras is still the most commonly used herbal remedy (Knick, 1986). There are also specialists in traditional healing, including one 84-year-old man very widely known for his ability to treat effectively an extensive list of ailments, from hypertension to arthritis to cancer.

As the conquest of America continued, from 1600 to the Revolution, Carolina's Indian people were driven from their homes, sometimes enslaved, frequently abused (Evans, 1971). The tendency of Indian people to coalesce themselves into communities, to adopt Indian people from other remnant tribes, to hold onto their identity as Indians and not to surrender it even though they had to speak English and dress in the European style to survive, this tendency resulted in the presence of Indian communities today. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Lumbee culture is that it is still here at all. Given all that they have been subjected to by the dominant society, it is a miracle that there are any Lumbee living here now.

Why should the Lumbee be recognized by the federal government? There are many reasons. They should be recognized because this is their ancestral land; they have always been here. They should be recognized because their occupation of this land has been continuous, as is shown by the archaeological, historical, and genealogical records. They should be recognized because their name is as old as the river's name. They should be recognized because despite epidemics and wars, disenfranchisement and oppression, they are still here. They should be recognized because they have held onto their Indian identity, their sense of who they are, when it would have been easier to leave all that behind. They should be recognized because even though they no longer speak their ancestral language, they still remember its name. They should be recognized because they have persisted in the culture of the heart, in holding onto the meaning of Lumbee. And there are many other reasons.

But in the final analysis, they should be recognized because it is right.