

Along the Robeson Trail

by Dr. Stan Knick, Director
PSU Native American Resource Center

The North Carolina Humanities Council has been one of the most consistent supporters of enlightening programs which relate to Native Americans in the state. The Greensboro-based agency, which receives the vast majority of its funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities, has sponsored countless projects large and small. These Humanities Council projects have helped make it possible to spread a lot of good words about Native American prehistory, history, literature, culture and contemporary issues. And southeastern North Carolina has received its share of the funding.

One of the Humanities Council's major recent projects was the three-year program for public school teachers entitled "Enriching the Agenda of American Culture." This project brought teachers from the Public Schools of Robeson County together with regional and national scholars for three summer institutes and numerous other workshops. These institutes and workshops focused on the three principal cultural groups of Robeson County—Native Americans during the first

The Humanities Council will also be sponsoring a two-day symposium on Native American writers in one of

our neighboring counties, at Bladen Community College in the spring of 1995. This project will bring talented high school students together with writers and scholars to examine the rich diversity and limitless possibilities of Native American writers.

Despite all this good work, and its many other worthwhile projects, the Humanities Council is in jeopardy. Information coming out of Washington indicates that funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities is very likely to be drastically reduced, and possibly cut entirely when Congress re-convenes in January. If this happens, it would bring the end of the North Carolina Humanities Council. The many significant Native American (and other) projects of the Humanities Council would be things of the past. Our collective future as a community would be darkened by cuts to Humanities programs, since we all need more humanity in our lives.

For more information, visit the Native American Resource Center in Old Main Building, on the campus of Pembroke State University.

PEMBROKE KIWANIS

by Dr. Ken Johnson

The annual Christmas Observance was held Tuesday evening at the Town and Country restaurant. Program chairman Ed teets presented Miss Lumbee, Lorna McNeill. Miss McNeill in her beautiful contralto voice sang Christmas carols and led group singing, enjoyed by the Kiwanians and their families. Miss Lumbee is a freshman at Pembroke State and the daughter of L.H. and Hazel McNeill. She is now busy traveling and appearing in many Christmas parades and attending many Indian conferences.

Rev. Vardell Swett presented the Christmas message. It is a joyous time for children as they receive their gifts. We look forward to Christmas church service Christmas Eve, the candle light services, going home receiving presents. It is a joyous time for churches emphasis on peace and the coming of Christ the Savior, the true meaning of Christmas. God brought a human into the World in the person of Jesus, Son of God. I trancends all logicin the spirit of wonder and mystery. There is a place in life for the heavenly care in joy and peace, in the Christian life. God's rescue of mankind in overcoming his death on the cross. Hope in Christ is the hope of the world as God is the victor over death.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Holiday Greetings from Ray Littleturtle in New Zealand

Dear Connie,

Holiday Greetings from New Zealand where my wife, "Kat", and I are spending our delayed honeymoon and Christmas among our friends and native people, the Maoris. We were deeply touched by the warm reception given us by Chief Joseph and his people upon our arrival here last Wednesday, Dec. 14.

Our three weeks stay here will afford us a rare opportunity to interact with our native brethren and share cultural exchanges through gift giving and ceremony. It is especially important that my people, the Lumbee, and more particularly, "Ol' Wiz" (a.k.a. Ruth Bullard Locklear) know that what I'm about is more than wearing leather, beads, and feathers.

I am a cultural fire keeper.

I think of myself as inclusive of all native peoples. And as I see it, native Peoples are a universal family and in so being, must work towards building cultural connections in the most effective ways possible. Over the next two weeks here in New Zealand I will work in gaining a deeper knowledge of the culture and tradition of the Maori people while sharing with them the rich history, culture, and tradition of the Lumbee. Being Native is about sharing; not about mere judging.

"Kat" and I take this opportunity to say "Merry Christmas" to you, our family, and many friends back home in North Carolina, U.S.A.

Ray Littleturtle

Things to think about during the holiday season

Dear Ms. Connee:

Once again it is the Season to be Jolly. Soon families will be gathering together to celebrate. I've heard a lot of talk about what kind of Christmas people want. Some want an old fashioned one. Others want a Christmas to remember. I would like for this to be a "Thinking Christmas." I would like to share with you some things to think about. Let's stop for a while and sit down and talk with one another. You can't be everywhere at once and neither can you please everyone. So stop trying! We need to talk about why we have Christmas. We need to talk about the birth of Jesus Christ, the hope of Peace on Earth.

To many children, Christmas is the time of getting lots of toys that may be forgotten by Spring. Take a child to church. Let them see for themselves what the real Christmas is about. The one thing children need the most is the one thing they don't get enough of—that is you. Take some quality time with them and share with them your most memorable Christmas.

On the subject of sharing, let's teach our children the true way of giving that is better to give than to receive. Share that spirit with them by an example. Indian people believe if you give something with the thought you will get something in return, then you truly have not given. I like the adopt the family program. The one thing I don't like is when we draw attention to ourselves as the givers by making a big deal about it. What is wrong with leaving it on the door step and walking away. I can be done if you think about it.

Maybe you feel that everything you do is impossible for you. Without God all things are impossible. With God all things are possible. HE will do this and more, if we only believe and allow him to enter our hearts and souls.

Of all the gifts we can give during this season, I can't think of a better gift to give to the one who has given you everything, you Lord and Savior. Give him you soul. Think what a great gift it would be to your family and friends. Think how much better your life would be. Maybe you have a drug problem, a problem with alcohol. Think of how sweet life would be to be free from this problem. Most of all, do it for yourself. You deserve the best life has to give, that is our Lord Jesus Christ. Remember him during his season and the new year to come. I hope I have given you some things to think about, pray about and dream about.

To my Christian brothers and sisters, let us take our lights out into the world that others may see that Jesus is real and alive today, still making an impact in other lives. And never forget you are not perfect, just forgiven, as you deal with those who do not know Jesus as their savior. God bless us each and every one. May this find you in the best of health and spirit and looking forward to the return of our Lord and Savior.

In the True Way,
Derek Lowry
Greensboro, North Carolina

The Sunday School Lesson

BY JOHN R. BRAYTON
SALEM MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

- God's Great Gift**
(Matthew 2:1-12)
- I. Wise Men (2:1-2)**
- II. Troubled Man (2:3-6)**
- III. Deceptive Plan (2:7-8)**
- IV. Joyful Worship (2:9-12)**

I. Wise Men (Matthew 2:1-2)
The wise men came from the East looking for Jesus. Bible scholars say that these wise men were probably astrologers; and that they lived in Persia (present day Iran). They saw the star in the East and came to worship Jesus. They must have had some knowledge about Bible prophecy because they recognized the star as that of Jesus. Apparently they were looking for the Messiah that the prophets had foretold. They came to seek out the one who was born King of the Jews.

II. Troubled Man

Herod was King of Israel at the time of Jesus' birth. When the wise men asked about where the King of the Jews was, the news got to Herod and he got very upset. Herod was disturbed mainly because he was insecure. He loved being King and did not want to give up his throne. When he heard the wise men asking about the King of the Jews, he thought Jesus was coming to take his throne. Herod was like many people today, they love their social standing, wealth, etc. more than having the peace that Jesus can give. In other words, Jesus is a threat to their life, as they see it. In Herod's anxiety he called for the Scribes and Chief Priests to find out where Jesus would be born. It is like the natural man when he gets disturbed about something, he asks advice from a man of God to get an answer to his problem. Sometimes the answer is not what they want to hear, but it may also soothe things over for a while. The Chief Priests and Scribes told Herod what he wanted to know. Sometimes lost

people know what they need to do when under conviction, but they want to work it out some other way. Herod found out that Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea, the first of the princes.

III. Deceptive Plan (2:7-9)

Herod sent for the wise men and asked them when they saw the star. After talking to them, he told them to find Jesus and come back to let him know where he was. Herod told them that he wanted to go and worship him. Of course, Herod's plan was to find Jesus and kill him. Many people today would like to rid the world of Jesus because like Herod he is a threat to their life style. Sometimes like Herod they use deception in the name of religion to try to thwart the gospel of Jesus Christ. They cannot see that Christ offers them eternal life and peace that passes all understanding.

IV. Joyful Noise (2:9-12)

The star led the wise men to the house where Jesus was. They rejoiced at seeing the star. The star stopped over the house where Jesus was and they went in to worship him. They had brought gifts of myrrh, gold and frankincense. The myrrh was symbolic of the death of Christ because it was used in the preparation of deceased bodies. The gold was a symbol of the purity of the Son of God. The frankincense was symbolic of Jesus' authority after worshipping Jesus, the wise men left, but God warned them in a dream to go home another direction. God let them know of Herod's deceptive plan to kill Jesus. Many times we are faced with people who try to deceive us, but if we listen to the Lord, He will reveal it to us. When we are in God's will, we will be able to see deception of others. The day that we live in we definitely need the wisdom of God more than ever to know when people are being deceitful or are for real. In today's world, people will use other people in the name of Jesus and think nothing of it. If you have not found the Lord's will for your life, first of all God's will for your life is to save you for Christ's sake. If you don't know Jesus as personal savior, why don't you accept God's greatest gift to the world right now and find out the real meaning of Christmas.

God bless you until next week.

Reflections

by Alta Nye Oxendine

May You Have a Blessed Christmas!

Getting "ready" for Christmas these days is a lot simpler for me than for most Americans. For several years I've been trying to concentrate on the REAL reason we have Christmas in the FIRST place, instead of all those traditions that tend to drive people crazy and wear them out long before that special day arrives. Like shopping (searching in store after store for JUST the "right" gift for each person you're "obliged" to buy for). Or decorating EVERYTHING in sight. Or staying up late baking pies, cakes, or cookies until you think you're going to drop. OR borrowing extra money just to make sure that Santa leaves a nice-looking, expensive toy for every child, and something REALLY special for the grown ups.

Last Sunday night the two DIFFERENT ways of CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS were vividly dramatized at Branch Street United Methodist Church by children, youth, and adults who attend that church. Rosemary Oxendine played the part of a TV reporter interviewing people as they rushed through "Branch Street Mall" before Christmas. As she asked each shopper what most of the shoppers what he or she liked best about Christmas, it was obvious that most of the shoppers were lost in the commercial, material meaning of Christmas like time off from work or school, buying presents, dreaming about all the gifts they were hoping to receive.

Finally, a few told the interviewer they were thankful for the TRUE meaning of Christmas. THEY Talked about Jesus coming to earth as a baby, into the home of Mary and Joseph. And about how the grown-up Jesus gave the greatest GIFT of all time, HIS OWN life, for EVER person on this earth. I was impressed by this skit, because most of the "mall shoppers" expressed attitudes that are typical of the majority of men, women and children in this country today. But, thankfully, there are nearly always a few who have come to appreciate what Christmas is REALLY all about.

To make this idea even clearer, we watched another scene, a Christian family celebrating Christmas in their own home. While they decorated a Christmas tree, they talked about how THAT tradition got started, about Martin Luther's idea that the trees in the forest are pointing heavenward. As the father was reading the story of the first Christmas out of the Bible, a stranded stranger came to the door to use the telephone. He became SO interested in what he was hearing about Jesus that he wanted to learn more. Before long, he decided to accept Jesus Christ as his OWN Lord and Savior. The scene ends as this man, no longer a stranger, is invited to join the family for their Christmas meal.

These are the ways that I, too, would like to celebrate Christmas every year!

No matter how busy and tired you may be from getting ready for Christmas, it is my prayer that you pause for a few moments, or an hour, to look in your Bible (in the gospels of Matthew or Luke) at that lovely old (yet NEW) STORY, or listen to the words of a familiar Christmas carol, and then thank God for sending His Son to this world.

Sincerely,
Alta Oxendine

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