

Editorial and Opinion Page

ALONG the ROBESON TRAIL

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

Last week we began looking at what is revealed about traditional Indian culture in *Native Heritage: Personal Accounts by American Indians 1790 to the Present* (edited by Arlene Hirschfelder). In the 1790 words of Hendrick Aupaumut, we saw the way the Creator had instructed the Mahicans to live. This week we turn within the pages of *Native Heritage* to a woman's point of view, one far to the west of Aupaumut's Massachusetts, but one not greatly removed in time and cultural perspective.

Maxidiwic was a Hidatsa Indian born around 1839 near the Knife River in the territory we now know as North Dakota. During her years she saw Hidatsa life change in drastic ways. When she was sixty-nine, and again when she was seventy-nine, she was interviewed by Gilbert Wilson about the old ways of Hidatsa culture:

"We Hidatsa do not reckon our kin as white men do. If a white man marries, his wife is called by his name, and his children also, as Tom Smith, Mary Smith. We Indians had no family names. Every Hidatsa belonged to a clan; but a child, when he was born, became a member of his mother's, not his father's clan.

"An Indian calls all members of his clan his brothers and sisters. The men of his father's clan he calls his clan fathers, and the women, his

clan aunts. Thus I was born a member of the *Tsistska*, or Prairie Chicken clan, because my mother was a *Tsistska*. My father was a member of the *Meedeepahdee*, or Rising Water clan....

"These relations meant much to us Indians. Members of a clan were bound to help one another in need.... Another clan relative is *makutsatee*, or clan cousin. I reckon as my clan cousins all members of my tribe whose fathers are my clan fathers.... Clan cousins had a custom that will seem strange to white people. We Indians are proud, and it makes our hearts sore if others make mock of us. In olden times if a man said to his friend, even in jest, 'You are like a dog,' his friend would draw his knife to fight. I think we Indians are more careful of our words than white men are.

"But it is never good for a man not to know his faults, and so we let one's clan cousins tease him for any fault he had. Especially was this teasing common among young men and young women. Thus a young man might be unlucky in war. As he passed the fields where the village women hoed their corn, he would hear some mischievous girl, his clan cousin, singing a song taunting him for his ill success. Were anyone else to do this, the young man would be ready to

fight; but seeing that the singer was his clan cousin, he would laugh and call out, 'Sing louder cousin, sing louder, that I may hear you....'

This cultural provision for dealing with the reality that "it is never good for a man not to know his faults" without causing any serious harm to the person demonstrates the sophistication of traditional kinship systems. People who were members of one's own clan, one's nearest relatives socially, were not allowed to make much fun of each other. This probably protected self esteem and encouraged creativity in growing young people. But because all were humans and thus subject to faults, an arrangement had to be made to keep everyone in balance in the community. The teasing of more distant relatives, the clan cousins, served that function well. Far from the stereotype of "primitive culture," traditional Indian kinship systems had worked out a social balance which maintained order at the same time that it provided a strong sense of belonging and well-being.

In the next segment, we will look at other examples from *Native Heritage*. For more information, visit the Native American Resource Center in historic Old Main Building, on the campus of The University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

Reader looks for equality in work place

To the Editor
Gentlemen, you are headed into the 21st Century... Wake up!

Life never ceases to amaze me, usually in a positive way and not a negative one. Yet, every once in a while I stumble upon someone who appears to be operating in a very limited reality.

I walked into a mobile home sales business on Tuesday afternoon to apply for a part-time sales position. I am a full time RCC student, looking for some part-time work. I stated my purpose to the first gentleman that I came in contact with. He introduced me to the "man in charge." Well, he first introduced himself to me, then I to him. He asked that I step into his office and take a seat. Up until this moment, everything was very, very pleasant. So he asked, "What can I do for you?" I then stated that I was looking for some part time work. He proceeded to inform me that I had just missed a position.... He had hired a cleaning lady just within the week and he just could not hire anyone else at the moment. My mind began to wander in a million directions in a matter of seconds, asking myself what made him think that I was applying for a cleaning position. Was it my mohair sweater? My silk blouse? Or my silver buckle alligator belt that made me look like I was applying for

a cleaning position and not a sales position? I know it wasn't my dialect I also wondered if this very handsome African American man had ever experienced any prejudice.

I am here to say, "Wake up, Gentlemen. You are headed into the 21st Century and there will be a woman beside you and not below you. And you need to get with the program." I have not met a so-called professional with this type of attitude in ages.

I was so set back with the comment that I truly forgot the name of the housing business. I do know that it was on the left side of the road before you get to Ted Parker's---and I was impressed with his business and personnel.

I wondered if this gentleman realized that most of his sales were to women. Yet, after he realized that I was looking for a sales position, he assured me that he did not have a position for me, "for that."

I am asking that all women who read this letter join me and not support any business that is prejudiced against women in "power." It is time we stand up, speak out and stop this stone age mentality.

Let there be equality on earth...and let it begin with me and you, you and you....

Patricia "Daystar" Dial
Red Springs, NC



Straight From The Cookie Jar "JUNK ABOUT INDIANS" REPLY

In a recent edition of The Robesonian an editorial comment by J Hart via King Syndicated Features was printed entitled "JUNK ABOUT INDIANS". I find fault with Mr. Hart for the "ignorance of the editorial" and also Donnie Douglas and his 2nd in command Kim Thompson for their statement of racial prejudice, in my opinion, when they somehow "mustered the nerve" to print this editorial knowing for a fact that over 40,000 Native American live in the boundaries of where their publication reaches.

In this past Sunday's editorial comment Mr. Douglas attempted to justify his publication of this editorial saying "that it is his job to report the news". When "Junk About Indians" was published it was not a publication of NEWS... it was indeed a publication of IGNORANCE, in my opinion. Mr. Douglas is not a STUPID MAN and he should have known that this editorial would cause more than one incident of racial tension. We all know that the Senior Newsroom Reporter Barabra Collins never saw this editorial, and that she had no say in the printing of this article.

Recently, Parks Publications JUMPED SHIP!!!! and sold The Robesonian. I just wish that he would have taken Donnie Douglas and Kim Thompson that would have been the best thing that he could have done for Robeson County, in my

opinion. The writer of this editorial should THANK GOD! that he does not reside in Robeson County. I know for a FACT that some of my Native American friends would love to have a pow wow with him!

He gives the "impression that he is only for the race that is the same color as him" which appears to be that of a TRUE KLANSMAN, racist and bigot. And Hart does need an "education... when it comes to the 40,000 of our area. I INVITE him to come to UNCP and see the exhibit where the Indian Kicked the KKK Butt, took their FLAG, locked up their LEADER in jail, and had the Honorable Judge Lacy Maynor tell them "to get out of here and never come back!"

What it all comes down to is the fact The Robesonian is only going to print what they want to print...whether it be the truth or not... and no matter who it hurts. I just wonder if these people know that God has got a place for people like these?

Vinita Maynor Clark

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