

Editorial And Opinion Page

The Old Log #202

— Not Just Any Old Log

By **Sonny Moore**

This log was once a magnificent tree living right here in Robeson County on a small island in the middle of Big Swamp - one of the largest trees standing in a million year old pristine forest. Towering above all others, catching first sun and casting last shadow, providing a thousand services for a thousand years, a favorite perch and nesting sight for generations of Bald Eagles and providing an eagle's eye view for a hundred miles in all directions. To the west, buffalo and elk grazing together among the Foothills; to the east, pocosin bays, large round lakes and the ocean; south, open savannahs and canebrakes among moss laden forest; to the north lay the Sandhills with its long leaf pine barrens and eastern end of the Uwharrie range.

With the tree and eagle working together, nothing went unnoticed for a thousand years from the Creek mound builders of the clay hills to the long canoes of the western Cherokee heavily laden with flint trade rocks and chestnuts coming downstream trading through the lands of Creek and Tuscarora on the way to the coastal land of the Croatan to trade for seashells, salt and dried fish. Large smoke among the southern canebrakes meant man-made fires set on three sides, next to a river, to drive animals into the water to be easily killed by club and spear by men in canoes. Tiny ripples on the water made by a lone hunter in a small dugout canoe among the water-filled pocosin bays with bow ready, easing up on bedded-down deer among the reed beds and tussets.

Along with sights of the day come sounds of the night - the beating of wings as turkey flew up to roost, bellowing buffalo, bugling elk, howling wolves, screams of the panther, screeching Carolina parakeets, and cooing of passenger pigeons; sounds of people singing and chanting among muffled drums talking back and forth between villages against the evening glow of far away burning pocosin bay. Some with deep laden peat would deep burn and smolder for many years. But all now extinct in just one half the life span of this one tree which was already 500 years old when Columbus was born and was a large sapling 500 before that, around 1000 A.D.

About that time, talking drums and far reaching traders began telling tales of white skinned men in big canoes with rows growing out of their heads and red hair growing from their faces prowling along the northern coast. A few hundred years passed and word came from the south of strange men riding on the backs of large ferocious animals, wearing pots on their heads and shiny turtle shells on their chests that arrows could not pierce, carrying long sticks that made smoke and thunder.

A few more generations passed and word came from the lands of the Croatan to the east of huge canoes with sails bringing strange men with white skin and hair growing out of their faces of many colors, wearing

funny clothes that covered every inch of their bodies and tall hats on their heads that scared all the animals. These men had many thunder sticks, but fished poorly. They built strong log houses, stayed put and did not move with the seasons. Having killed off all the wildlife around them, they soon began to starve, forcing the Croatan inland in search of better hunting grounds, who were more than glad for the whites to join them and bring along their superior iron pots, axes, knives, and thunder sticks which would be very much needed when reaching lands of the more powerful and war-like Tuscarora.

So all moved inland together, not to be heard from again for another two hundred years when Scottish explorers looking for land to settle on the upper reaches of the Cape Fear River began hearing stories of a strange tribe of Indians living to the west along Drowning Creek, living in log houses, farming, practicing Christianity, speaking the Old World Queen's English, and some having blond hair, blue eyes, and the same surnames as were on the manifest of Gov. White's Lost Colony.

This was a time when the 10 year war began with the powerful Tuscarora Indian Nation which was still in firm control of the entire Cape Fear River Basin with no less than 16 large villages and 1200 warriors, with the main head village on the east side of the river at Cross Creek near Fayetteville. After 10 years of treacherous, bloody, inhumane fighting the new settlers still could not conquer the mighty Tuscarora. Only when germ warfare was introduced were they finally and 100% totally subdued and nearly wiped out. Whether introduced on purpose or by accident, the deadly English diseases to which the Indians had no built up immunity did to the Tuscarora what ten years of war could not. But the Indians not involved in the 10 year war living nearby on Drowning Creek, had built up immunity to the English diseases that killed 90% of the Tuscarora.

With all the Indians now gone, except for small scattered bands and the rest farmers and hunters like the Cherokee and Creek posing no threat, new settlers began pouring into the Cape Fear River Basin by the thousands with great demand for tremendous amounts of lumber. So pristine forest began to fall. First to go was the easiest to get to. All the huge live oak growing right up to the water's edge along the coast with their huge limbs drooping back down to the ground made good ship ribbing. Next all the trees along major river, then small river, then creek - anything big enough to float a log or build a dam for water power. Huge lumber companies were formed and sawmills sprang up everywhere - large stationary mills near the water; while hundreds of small portable steam fired mills combed through the countryside cutting every large tree that man, mule, ox, and saw could get to.

By the 1880s, the only old growth timber left standing was in what up until now was the impregnable

swamps of Ashpole, Indian, Big Coward, Flowers and Bear. But with greed outweighing need, and resetting cut-over land not yet heard of, every ingenious device known to man at the time was utilized in the last great assault on the last pristine old growth forest until the last large tree was cut down. With each large timber company in a fever pitch of a race with another, spending enormous amounts of money to which no profit would have possibly been recovered, going into the swamps building tram roads, railroads, line spurs, bridges, train trestles, crossing rivers, even building railroads from the big mills at Boardman to each swamp, just to haul logs back only to be abandoned when the trees ran out. Even digging canals from the river up through the swamps to float logs back down to the mill at Boardman, with each log having a number stamped in the end to identify company owner before sawing at mills all along the Lumber River from Maxton, Harpers Ferry, Lumberton, Boardman, Fair Bluff, with many off load landings in between where logs were pulled, hauled and rolled to the river, such as Sunday's Landing, Princess Ann, Horse's Bluff, High Hill and many others.

Every high bluff along the entire length of Lumber River that does not flood has been in use by the Indians for thousands of years as villages and trade centers, same as today. When the bluff at Stephens Park was taken over by the new settlers, they established a trade center for river traffic. Then came the sawmill, creating a lumber industry giving both the town and the river its present day name which now, after much ground work being laid, brings us back to our story.

The old log #202 - a solid log of blackheart cypress cut a hundred years ago from a thousand year old tree in a million year old pristine forest, just as solid now as the day it was cut from which a 16 foot board 32 inches wide could still be cut. At the time, for a tree this big to be felled by a crosscut saw, scaffolding, catwalk and springboard would have had to have been built up around its huge bulging base, probably taking two men the better part of a day before the thundering, earth-shaking jar as the giant came crashing down to be sawed up in 16 foot logs, winched over and rolled into the canal for that final trip down to Boardman. But it was too heavy to float, sank to the bottom and settled into the mud where it lay under water, undisturbed for a hundred years before accidentally being dug up by a dragline operator and hauled off to a nearby sawmill to be unceremoniously sawed into boards.

But as fate would have it or as one last defiant act to save itself as it did a hundred years earlier, it was too large for the saw blade; and being too heavy to easily be moved, just lay there for years as a curiosity and conversation piece, until obtained by this writer to be donated to the Lumber River Historical Conservatory and put on permanent display at Lumber River State Park at Princess Ann.

Pediatric Pointers

By: **Joseph T. Bell**
Pediatrician

Last issue we talked about how to prevent choking episodes in young children. As promised, this week we will discuss what to do if you have a child that is choking at home.

The American Red Cross and the American Heart Association offer formal training courses in what to do if a child is choking as do many Pediatrics and General Hospitals. Such courses are strongly recommended for the parents of young children. Your doctor may also have illustrated step by step directions for performing maneuvers to help relieve obstruction of the airways caused by choking. If a child is coughing, crying, or speaking leave that child alone or encourage them to keep making noises and the natural reflexes of the child will help relieve the obstruction.

If you can not hear the child trying to breathe, cough or talk, it is time to take action. Other signs that might indicate that the airway is obstructed include blue lips and fingers, limpness and loss of consciousness. If you see these signs, breath 3 or 4 times directly into the mouth. Then activate your local emergency medical system by calling 911. If you know how to perform emergency life saving maneuvers do so until trained help arrives. If you can see the obstruction in the back of the mouth reach in and try to pull it out.

After your child has had a choking episode severe enough to warrant emergency help, talk with a physician. Some children will need to be examined immediately. Even if your child appears well and is acting normally immediately following the episode, call the doctor if any of the following signs appear within 3 to 4 days:

1. Persistent coughing, wheezing, or noises breathing.
 2. Fever
 3. Difficulty or any discomfort in eating or swallowing food
 4. Persistent drooling.
 5. Any breathing difficulties.
- That is all on choking episodes. Take care. We will talk again next week.

Me and ol' Hubert a'fishing...

Ranting and Raving



Garry Lewis Barton

No doubt, a lot of folk are heaving sighs of relief now that the election is over, still Sheriff Glenn Maynor having garnered 70% of the vote in his landslide victory over his opponent.

Whether you like him or not, Hubert Stone was, and always will be, a formidable opponent in any endeavor in which he engages.

I don't know him well enough to make a determination whether or not I like him. But even though he and I probably will never go on a fishing trip together in the foreseeable future, I have the utmost respect for the man and wish him well.

There has always been a rift of sorts among the three races of people in this county, but especially between Indians and whites.

The color of an opponent's skin should not, nor should it ever have been, a factor in an election. In the past it was. That's sad. But true. So don't kill the messenger 'cause you don't like the message.

But the landslide victory of Native American Sheriff Glenn Maynor over his very formidable and capable white opponent, former sheriff Hubert Stone, suggests race will never again play such a crucial role in future elections in ol' Robeson as it has in the past. And that's good news, folk.

And the county is a better place in which to live because of it, giving credence to the age-old adage, united we stand, divided we fall.

There's strength in numbers, folk. The recent election may have been the first instance in the county's turbulent racial history during which Indians, blacks and whites joined hands together in quest of a common goal without one or the other, or all three, trying to stab the others in the back.

Sure, ol' Hubert and I probably still won't be going on any fishing trips any time soon, and even if we did, we'd probably still keep watching our respective backs because old habits are hard to break.

I used to think ol' Martin Luther King was somewhat naive for daring to dream about the day when all men will be judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin.

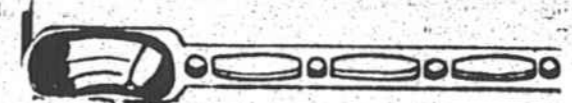
Congratulations Sheriff Glenn Maynor. And good luck Hubert in your future endeavors. It is, indeed, time for all three races to join hands together and move forward.

Now, about that fishing trip... Nah, what was I thinking? The truth is, in addition to lacking that close affinity with Mother Nature my ancestors enjoyed, I don't even like fishing. As far as I'm concerned, God made two classes of folk - fishers, and eaters of fish; and I'm a dedicated member in good standing (as long as I don't have to hold a pole in my hand for extended periods of time while standing) of that latter category.

Good luck, Hubert, anyhow. Though we may not be going on any fishing trips anytime soon, it is sort of ironic that Glenn Maynor's victory was so successful in bridging that long-standing rift between Indian and white folk, the day ol' Martin was dreaming about when all men will be judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin is a lot closer in good ol' Robeson. So is the day when I might be trading in my ol' pen, and Hubert his gun, for fishing poles. But I won't buy the worms just yet.

I've seen a time when folk would cringe when they heard someone talking like this, but the truth is that Sheriff Glenn Maynor's victory is proof positive that it's time to bury the hatchet, folk. And I ain't a' talking about how it was done in the past - in each other's backs. We'll talk again, folk.

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