

Cp970.03
B43

Remarks

Bellamy

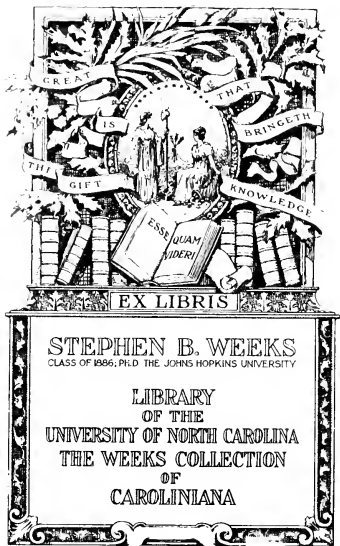


Photo
Pamphlet
Binder
Gaylord Bros.
Makers
Syracuse, N. Y.
941 JAN 21, 1908

REMARKS

OF

HON. JOHN D. BELLAMY,

OF NORTH CAROLINA,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1900.



WASHINGTON.
1900.

REMARKS
OF
HON. JOHN D. BELLAMY.

The House having under consideration the Indian appropriation bill—

Mr. BELLAMY said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I had the honor some time since of introducing into this House a bill providing for the education and support of the children of the Croatan Indians of North Carolina. On yesterday the chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs very courteously accorded to me an opportunity to address the committee upon the subject. Several of the members requested me, on account of their interest, to present them to the House.

Mr. Chairman, the Indians of the United States are peculiarly the wards of the nation, and very justly they should be so regarded and so dealt with. They were once the proud possessors of our soil, but to the inexorable decree of fate they have succumbed, and the Teutonic race, against which in its progress all less civilized peoples have given away and retired, has pressed them westward, and the plains and forests of the eastern slope and seaboard of America, once their happy haunts and hunting grounds, is inhabited no longer by them, except by the remnants of a few scattered tribes which almost have been, but not entirely, absorbed by contact with the white man and his allies.

The white settlers of America, while they wrested from the aborigines the soil on which they dwelt, which on account of the nomadic habits of the Indian tribes could hardly be said to be possessed by them, have been from the earliest period of our history imbued with a laudable feeling that justice and humanity required that the Indians should receive Government consideration and protection, that they might acquire fixed abodes, and by civilizing influences they might, in the course of time, become co-sharers in the blessings of a free Government.

The last tribe left lingering on the scene of these once royal domains is the Croatans or Hatteras Indians, inhabiting the State of North Carolina, about 60 miles from the seaboard, in the counties of Robeson, Scotland, Richmond, and Columbus, and there they have been for a period so long that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary thereof." That they have not claimed the attention of the National Government before is a matter which excites great surprise and is hard to be explained, unless the smallness of their number and the lack of education and enlightenment among them, and the want of proper philanthropy among their neighbors, has caused them to be entirely overlooked. And yet the public mind has been directed to them on more than one occasion when they have shocked the country by some atrocity which is incident to the Indian character.

There are in the settlement in Robeson County, where they chiefly reside, about 3,000 souls, and with the scattered families in adjoining counties the number may run to 2,000 men, making the tribe about 5,000 people. A number of them have migrated to Georgia, Mississippi, and Florida, where they have become absorbed in the body politic. They are the most interesting people in America, and no tribe can appeal stronger to the tender sympathies and the generous beneficence of the American people than the Croatan Indians of North Carolina. They, beyond cavil or doubt, are the descendants of the lost colony of Sir Walter Raleigh, about which there have been for over three hundred years so many sad reflections.

Those at all familiar with the attempts at colonization made by our English ancestors may recall the efforts of that gallant knight and learned and ambitious favorite of Queen Elizabeth.

Not only could Sir Walter throw his cloak on the wet ground that it might serve a footcloth for the dainty shoe of Elizabeth, but he sought to extend the domains of her Most Gracious Majesty that her reign might become memorable in the annals of history and her Empire strengthened and enriched.

In the year 1584 Raleigh fitted out a fleet of ships under Amadas and Barlow and discovered the country that is now known as North Carolina, but then called Virginia, in honor of the virgin Queen. Soon thereafter he began to make efforts to colonize the

new Eldorado. Two attempts failed: but undaunted, in 1587, in three ships under John White, whom he appointed governor, he sent over 117 persons, including 17 women, and of the fate of these people nothing is known or has been discovered with absolute certainty from that day to this, unless this is shown by the remarks I shall now make, and which was first attempted by my old friend and preceptor, Hamilton McMillan. These 117 colonists were left on Roanoke Island, near the "harbor of Hatorask," and there, on August 18, 1587, the daughter of Governor White, the wife of Ananias Dare, gave birth to a daughter, the first white child born on American soil, and named and baptized, in honor of Her Majesty, Virginia Dare.

The ships, leaving the colony, returned for supplies and recruits, but when they reached England the Kingdom was agitated by a threatened invasion from Spain. Afterwards the Spanish Armada was defeated, and when peace was once more restored Raleigh looked around to provide for the relief of his colony which he had planted in the New World a few years before. But it was not until 1590 that Governor White was dispatched to their rescue, and when he reached Roanoke, in August, he found the island deserted; no trace of a human being could be found, but at the site of the village where the settlers were left nearly three years before there was found a tree which had been deprived of its bark and bore, in clear and well-cut characters, the word "Croatan."

There had been an understanding by White with the colonists before leaving that if they should remove their location they should carve on a tree the name of the place to which they had gone; and if they were in danger or sore distress they should carve a cross above the name on the tree. White finding the absence of the cross was buoyed with the hope of their discovery, but after all efforts to trace them had proved fruitless, he was forced to abandon the search and reluctantly returned to England.

The lost colony was never heard of, and their sad fate is a matter of deep and pathetic interest to the American people. Whether they went to Croatan voluntarily or whether the men were massacred and the women taken for wives, or whether both men and women intermarried with the Hatteras Indians is only a matter of conjecture. But one fact is known, and that is that Lawson,

in his history of Carolina, written in the year 1714, imparts to us that—

The Hatteras Indians, who lived on Roanoke Island or much frequented it, tell us that several of their ancestors were white people and could talk in a book, as we do; the truth of which is confirmed by gray eyes being found frequently among those Indians and no others. They value themselves extremely for their affinity to the English, and are ready to do them all friendly offices. It is probable that the settlement miscarried for want of timely supplies from England or through the treachery of the natives, for we may reasonably suppose that the English were forced to cohabit with them for relief and conversation, and that in process of time they confined themselves to the manners of their Indian relations, and thus we see how apt human nature is to degenerate.

Long prior to the Revolutionary war there was found settled near Lumber River, in Robeson County, N. C., a tribe of Indians. Many of them had blue eyes, and while possessing all other traits and characteristics of Indians—the copper color, the high cheek bone, the erect form—yet they lacked the nomadic habit. They were settled in a neighborhood where they still remain, then, as now, cultivating maize and potatoes and fruits. Their traditions then, as now, were that their ancestors, Indian men, married white women; that they came from Roanoke (in Virginia, they say); that they were driven away by bad Indians, and, as one now about 90 years of age told your speaker, that they were driven across the river. Most of them own their own land, which they either bought from the early settlers—who, on account of the Indian being already in possession, quitclaimed it for a nominal consideration—or obtained it by an entry and grant from the Commonwealth. The names of the 117 lost colonists are still preserved in Hakluyt, Volume III, wherein is given an account of “The fourth voyage made to Virginia with three ships in the year 1587, wherein was transported the second colony.”

From the list of names are many now and from the earliest times borne by men of this tribe, such as John Sampson, Robert Wilkinson, Henry Berry, Richard Berry, John Burden, Henry Dorrel (Dial), John Cheven, William Berden, and many others. Thus it is seen that their blue eyes, the tradition of the white mothers, the locality from which they came, the lack of the nomadic habit derived from the infusion of English blood, the similarity of names, the tradition of being driven by the bad Indians across the river, doubtless by the warlike and hostile Tus-

caroras, who inhabited also the neighboring coast country, prove conclusively to the student of the question that the lost colony of Raleigh has been found. They are a remarkable people. It is said by old residents that some of these Indians were volunteers in the Revolutionary war. That they sent two companies to the war of 1812 is well authenticated.

They made gallant soldiers, as a number of our oldest inhabitants can testify. From the earliest times up to the year 1835 they went to school with the whites, voted and shared in the privileges of citizenship. But in that year the constitution of North Carolina was amended, and thereafter for a period of thirty-three years they were deprived, not only of the right to vote, but even of the privileges of education, until the constitution of 1868 was passed, whereby they became restored to citizenship and to school privileges of the most meager character, but such as other citizens enjoyed.

They were not permitted to attend the schools for whites, and therefore were forced, if they received any education, to attend the negro schools. They refused to a very great degree, on account of the intense antipathy they now have for the negro, the education in the negro schools until, through the instrumentality of Hamilton McMillan, esq., the legislature of North Carolina, in 1887, gave them separate schools of their own.

At the breaking out of hostilities between the North and the South in 1861 these people, grown up in ignorance, but quietly cultivating their little farms, were rudely awakened by the Confederate authorities conscripting them and using them as laborers to build the immense sand fortifications at New Inlet, on the Cape Fear River, known as Fort Fisher: the same fortifications so celebrated as having been the scene of the greatest naval bombardment of the world's history, as compared with which an officer who was at Sebastopol said:

The siege of Sebastopol as compared with the siege of Fort Fisher was but child's play.

The work was hard, the Croatan murmured; he then deserted and fled to the swamps of his native heath. The conscripting officers pursued them. Arresting an old Indian, they asked him why he deserted. He told them that he did not want to work or

fight for a people who treated him so unjustly; that before 1835 he voted, he went to school, but since then he had been deprived of both, and that he would neither work nor fight for the Confederacy. And thus it was they were arrested and deserted. When at the close of the war many of them were in hiding, they committed acts of depredation, for which they were properly outlawed, and then arose the band known as the Henry Berry Lowery gang. For years they became a terror to the country, and in the early seventies this band of Indians shot down and killed 27 white men from first to last among the wealthiest, the bravest, and best men of that county. The leader, Henry Berry Lowery, was finally killed, peace and quiet was again restored, and under the benign influence and rule of our people, inaugurated in the year 1887, they are becoming good citizens.

There is still much ignorance and a strong propensity to violate the internal revenue laws among some few of them, but it is because they know not the sinfulness of the violation of law. They from time immemorial have raised fine fruit and grain, and have always distilled brandy and whisky, and, like some other citizens, they feel that it is an unjust interference with their natural rights to prevent them from converting their waste products into a salable article. Many of the cases in our United States courts for manufacturing without license are from among these people. They are and have always been a distinct people. They are true friends, but bitter and implacable enemies.

They are brave, but reckless. They are honest in their dealings. They are intensely religious. They are restless, active, and energetic. Indolence and sloth are not known among them. They are eager for education. They are capable of intellectual and moral development, as is attested by some among them. A number have become successful merchants. One of them filled the position of United States Senator from one of our sister Southern States. The descendant of another has become a member of Congress.

Now, these are the people I commend to the kind consideration of the American Congress. Their school facilities are poor. By extending them aid you are giving expression in substantial form to that noble sentiment of justice inherent in our people and which

has urged our Government to make large appropriations for the education and support of Indian tribes which passes each session of Congress. No tribe is entitled to more at our hands: and if in the providence of God they be elevated by a sound moral and mental training inaugurated by the Government, history will yet say that Sir Walter Raleigh did not plant his colony in vain, and there will yet arise some gifted American writer who will perpetuate in song and weave in fiction the story of the Croatan Indians, the descendants of the Indian chief, Manteo, created the first Lord of Roanoke, and of Virginia Dare, the first white child born on American soil. [Applause.]

4017

O

UNIVERSITY OF N.C. AT CHAPEL HILL



00030721568

FOR USE ONLY IN
THE NORTH CAROLINA COLLECTION

