

Southeastern North Carolina Reunion Of Colored Kindred

PenderROCK
free persons of color circa 1761

Merritt - Messick - Walker - West - Wheeler - Williams - Jacobs

Black & White Ball

Saturday, May 22, 2010

Opening Tyrone Goodwyn

Welcome Ethel Jacobs Briggs

Song Haile Briggs

Invocation Ann Jacobs Newell

dinner buffet open



Wheeler Messick *Merritt* West
WALKER **Jacobs** **Williams**



An excerpt from: "Pender County Celebrates the Life and Legacy of Horace & Idelia Hamlin"
..... Written by Liston N. Filyaw
..... Directed by Frances McAlpine Sharp

Musical entertainment Tia Singleton

PenderROCK History Tyrone S. Goodwyn

Closing: Looking back at PenderROCK 2010 Briggs/Goodwyn

>>> Music and Fellowship <<<

Leon Faircloth IV
Deejay

Marty Williams
Photographer





Frequently-Asked Questions

What does 'PenderROCK' mean?

'Pender' is the name of the county in NC where many of our ancestors lived. Most of the surnames have been there since the 1700's. Merritts and Williams moved there from neighboring Sampson County in the 1870s. "ROCK" is Reunion Of Colored Kindred.

When the several reunions merged into one, we needed a 'handle' to call the reunion without having to recite a long list of surnames.

How long has the reunion been meeting?

One of the founding reunions, the Walker Family Reunion, began in the mid-1980s. Other reunions (Wheeler, Williams, ...) began to merge with the Walker Family Reunion. Around the same time, the Jacobs Family Reunion also started in Pender County. The Merritts joined the Jacobs reunion. The two large reunions trialed a merger by holding their events on the same weekend for several years, then officially combined in 1997.

Are we Cherokee?

No. The Cherokee lived in the far western part of NC; in the mountains adjoining Tennessee. They were also in Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina. They were not the original people of southeastern North Carolina. People (your Grandma) have tended to use 'Cherokee' as a name for *any* Indian people (like 'Kleenex' or 'Xerox'). You should not take this to mean you share the same bloodline as the Iroquoian Cherokee people.

Are we Indian?

Genetically, probably as much as you are anything else. PenderROCK people were people of color. Their ancestors are the remnants of the original tribes of the area that were enslaved, decimated by disease, and conquered in war. So they went 'DL' – assimilated as best they could into the conquering European society, forgoing their native language, dress, names, and customs. PenderROCK ancestors are also escaped Africans and freed Africans (often Afro-Anglo offspring). PenderROCK ancestors are also English, Scottish, and Irish men and women who bore colored children out of power trips or love. Make no assumptions.

Culturally, you are not Indian. PenderROCK people affiliated with freed slaves in the Reconstruction period after the Civil War. This drove a wedge (segregation) between them and their free colored cousins in the neighboring counties who chose to re-assert their Indian heritage to avoid Jim Crow. So PenderROCK people became browner over time, and merged into colored/Negro/Black/African American culture. To announce yourself as 'Indian' is similar to Thomas Jefferson & Sally Hemmings' white great-great-great grandchildren suddenly declaring themselves 'Black'. How does that feel?

Can my children go to school free because of their Indian blood?

No. Make them do their homework and get good grades! Culturally, you are Black. Genetically, you are mixed race. Your original ancestor tribes have been lost in history, so you can't point back to a living tribe as your ancestors. The Bureau of Indian Affairs scholarships are for federally-recognized native persons. Even your cousin tribes in NC are only state-recognized and ineligible for federal funds.

What happened to the Love Grove School Project and the money?

The Walker Scholarship funds that we voted to set aside to renovate the 1800s one-room school building of PenderROCK people is still in the PenderROCK Treasury and is highlighted in each treasurer's report. We have spent zero dollars.

A separate non-profit legal entity 'PenderROCK Foundation' was established with the Secretary of State of NC. This requires a separate board of directors, plans, budgets, etc. We have started the paperwork to gain federal non-profit status for PenderROCK Foundation. Frankly, we are stuck. We need committed hands *within Pender County* to move forward. We had hoped that New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, historically the partner of Love Grove School and our people's ancestral church, would allow us to place the school on their property. We need to procure land on which to place the school.