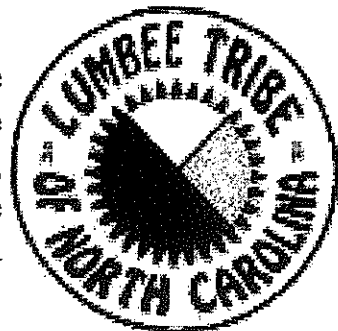




## *The Lumbee Tribe*



The Lumbee—which means “dark water” in the Algonquian language—took their name from the Lumbee (aka Lumber) River which flows through Robeson County, NC. With more than 50,000 members, it is the largest tribe in North Carolina, the largest east of the Mississippi, and the ninth largest in the nation.



Ancestors of the Lumbee tribe include the Algonquian-speaking Croatan Indians, as well as the Cheraw and other Siouan-speaking Indians. These different tribes later merged when almost most of their people were killed by smallpox and other diseases brought by white settlers.

### **Location**

The Cheraw tribe resided mainly along the Dan River near southeast Virginia. The Croatan Indians were located along Drowning Creek (now the Lumbee River) near Lake Waccamaw in what is now North Carolina. Today, over 40,000 tribe members live in Robeson, Hoke and Scotland counties, with others located in counties such as Guilford.

### **History**

#### **Pre-1800**

When colonists settled on Roanoke Island, the Cheraw-Croatan Indians treated the newcomers kindly, teaching them their methods for fishing, farming, and hunting and introducing them to their foods.

In 1587, Governor John White left Roanoke Colony and returned to England for supplies. Due to war between England and Spain, he was unable to return for three years. When he did return, the entire colony was gone, with the only clues being the word “Croatoan” carved into a post and “CROA” carved into a tree trunk.

Because of a terrible storm that forced him back to England, John White was never able to locate the colonists. However, it is believed the Croatan Indians brought the colonists back to their village called Croatoan and many Indians intermarried with the white colonists as well as with people of African descent.



The Indians lived quietly and in isolation for nearly 150 years in present-day Robeson County. In the 1730s, immigrants from Scotland came to the area where they documented encountering several Indian families with the surnames Locklear, Chavis, Oxendine, Hammond, Brook, Cumbo, Revels, Carter, and Kersey, names of many of the Roanoke colonists.

They also lived in English-style houses, wore European clothing, spoke English fluently, and practiced Christianity. Many of them also had blue eyes, which was rare among Native Americans. In 1753, the acting governor of North Carolina issued a proclamation identifying the Drowning Creek (Lumber River) area as Indian lands.


### **The 1800s**

By the early 1800s, difficulties arose for the many Native American tribes in the eastern United States. Thousands of people were forced to leave their homes and go west. Because their land was not considered valuable by settlers or the United States government (there were no minerals such as gold on the land), the Lumbee (still known as the Croatan at this time) was one of the few tribes not forced to leave their homeland.

However, it was an era of terrible racism and injustice towards non-white people, especially in the South. In 1835, the North Carolina State Constitution was amended to take away many legal and citizenship rights of Native Americans and African-Americans. One of the biggest rights Indians lost was the right to vote, which took away their voice in government. Another right that was lost was the right to carry firearms, which meant Indians could not hunt or protect themselves with a gun. In many instances, white farmers used the new laws to unfairly take advantage of Indians and take away parts of their land.

### **The Legend of Henry Berry Lowrie**

In North Carolina during the Civil War, Indians and African-Americans were forced by the Confederacy to work on the construction of Fort Fisher near the city of Wilmington. The conditions the men had to work under were very harsh. They had little food, little sleep and had to work in bad weather. Many became sick with yellow fever and died. Those who refused to work were threatened or harmed.



The Home Guard, which was responsible for keeping law and order during the war, was corrupt and dishonest. Many Indian families were falsely accused of stealing food, keeping guns, and hiding Yankee soldiers and Confederate deserters. To avoid being rounded up and shipped off to work by the Home Guard or being unjustly accused of a crime, several Native American men hid out in the swamps.

One of those men was Henry Berry Lowrie, a teenager from a well-respected Lumbee family. Lowrie had had enough of the injustices being done to his people. In 1864, Lowrie gathered together a group of men that included Lumbees (mainly Lowrie brothers and cousins), African-Americans, and one Scots-American to fight their oppressors. Over the next several years, Lowrie and his band took revenge as they stole from the rich and gave to the poor of Robeson County.


In 1868, the North Carolina state constitution was amended, giving Indians back many important citizenship rights. Henry Berry Lowrie disappeared in 1872, but many people believe that his legendary acts not only helped Native Americans regain their rights, but also the freedom to live without fear.

### **Late 1800s**

The Native American people of Robeson County received state recognition as Croatan Indians in 1885 and were given a separate school system. In 1887, the nation's first state-supported school of higher education for Native Americans was established in Pembroke. This institution named the Croatan Indian Normal School would eventually grow to become the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. In 1888, the Croatan Indians began petitioning the U.S. government for federal recognition.

### **1900-Present**

For years, the Croatan Indians were unhappy with the name their tribe was given by the government. Thus, in 1911 it was changed to the Indians of Robeson County. In 1913, the name was again changed to the Cherokee Indians of Robeson County, which upset the Eastern Band of Cherokee, who felt the two tribes were distinct. The Robeson County Indians finally agreed to name themselves the Lumbee tribe after the Lumber River.



For the next several years, the Lumbee Indians worked towards getting federal recognition and better funding for education. In 1930, the Bureau of Indian Affairs sent anthropologists to Robeson county to study the Lumbees' origins and test their authenticity as Indians. Many of the tests conducted by the anthropologists were considered demeaning and several Lumbees refused to take part in them.



The North Carolina General Assembly officially recognized the tribe as Lumbee Indians of North Carolina in 1953. Three years later, in 1956, the United States Congress passed the Lumbee Act, declaring the Lumbee a tribe, but not quite giving them full recognition.

Shortly after the act was passed, the Klu Klux Klan (the hate group that for years had been terrorizing non-white people in the South) began harassing and threatening the Lumbee people in Robeson County. On January 18, 1958, over 500 Lumbees disrupted a rally by the KKK and forced them out of the county. The conflict, known as the Battle of Hayes Pond, made national and international news.

Since early 1970s, they have been working to preserve and restore Indian schools and landmarks in Robeson County. Bills have also been introduced to amend the Lumbee Act to provide the tribe with full federal recognition and benefits.

While they had a governing body for years, the first Lumbee Tribal Government was elected in 2000. In 2001, the tribe adopted their own constitution. Meanwhile, tribal officials continue to make efforts for full federal recognition of the tribe.

## Culture

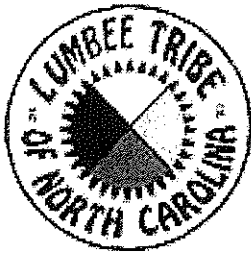


The Lumbee people have always valued families. For many years, the family unit was considered a community within the tribe and led by the eldest family member. In times of trouble, hardship or decision-making, the community looked to the elders for the final word.

Communities were represented by one or two members on the tribal council, which was overseen by a council leader was appointed by the tribal leadership when a leader died or was no longer able to serve as chief.



Today the Lumbee tribe is governed by a Tribal Council which is divided into three branches: Executive (Chairman and Tribal Administrator), Legislative (Tribal Council) and Judicial (Supreme Court). Each branch works with the others to maintain tribal unity. The Lumbee tribe does not have designated land on which to live, but remains united through efforts to maintain their heritage and traditions.



To help maintain their tribal identity the tribe created a Lumbee logo, which symbolizes the circle of life and the importance of each Lumbee being a whole person. There are four parts to the circle which represent the four qualities of a balanced life: the spiritual, the emotional, the physical, and the intellectual.

The colors and location of the colors represent the four directions: East (yellow), South (red), West (black) and North (white). Together these symbols represent a well-balanced individual as well as a complete human being. The colors red, yellow, black and white also represent the equality of all humankind.

The Lumbee pinecone patchwork surrounding the circle of life represents the pride, power and will of the Lumbee tribe. The four directions, colors and Lumbee patchwork are central features of the Lumbee logo and depict how old and new traditions come together as one symbol of unity for the Lumbee tribe of North Carolina.

## Language

The language spoken by the ancestors of the Lumbee Indians was a mixture of Siouan and Algonquian languages and includes Croatan, Cheraw, Tuscarora, Catawba and other dialects. However, since it was never written down and is no longer spoken, this language has been lost. Many feel that this loss of language is what is preventing the Lumbee from receiving full federal recognition and services.

Over the course of more than 200 years, the Lumbee people developed their own unique dialect known as Lumbee English. This dialect is a mixture of English, Highland-Scots, and Scots-Irish dialects and resembles that of the dialect spoken by people on the Outer Banks of North Carolina.



## Economy

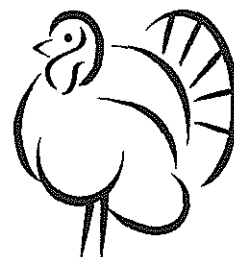
For centuries, the Lumbee relied on their hunting and farming alone to make their living. When European settlers arrived, the Lumbees began to trade what they grew, made, and hunted for what the Europeans had imported.

Towards the end of the Civil War to the early 1900s, many Lumbees worked in the turpentine industry, stripping the bark from long-leaf pine trees and collecting the sap. Because the trees used for turpentine only lasted a few years, the supply of trees was eventually depleted, and some families moved to Georgia to continue working in the industry.

Today the Lumbee people work within their communities. The LDRA, a testing program, works to help some of the more disadvantaged Lumbee communities by making computers and internet connections available to more people. Community leaders hope that making this technology available to all will help raise the standard of living for the Lumbees within these communities.

## Food

For many years, the Lumbee people have farmed corn, squash, peas, beans, corn, sweet potatoes, and rice. They gathered honey and fruits and made cider. They also hunted deer, wild turkeys, and pigs, using every part of the animal for food, clothing, decoration, jewelry, musical instruments, and other uses.



People of the Lumbee tribe also grew tobacco, which—along with sweet grass, sage and cedar—is considered a sacred herb and a gift from the Creator. Tobacco is often burned in purification rituals and to offer prayers and thanks to the Creator.

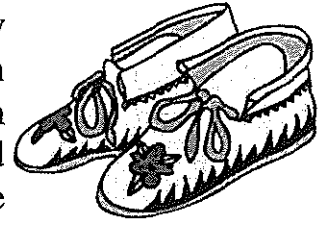
Native American foods have had a big influence on American dishes, especially in the South. Many Lumbee recipes reflect both Indian and Southern culture with dishes such as barbeque, fried chicken, cornbread, fry bread, okra, turnip greens, vegetable soup, beef stew, succotash, chicken and pastry, sausage and rice, and chicken bog (chicken and rice).



Robeson County has its own unique dessert. It is a yellow cake baked in individual layers, which are iced with chocolate frosting. This cake can have anywhere between six and 15 thin layers and is served in very thin slices.

## Clothing

Before white settlers arrived, Lumbee people most likely dressed similar to other tribes in the area. Lumbee men wore breech cloats and women wore breech cloats with knee-length skirts. They may have also worn beaded headbands with a few feathers. Both men and women wore moccasins and tattoos on their bodies.

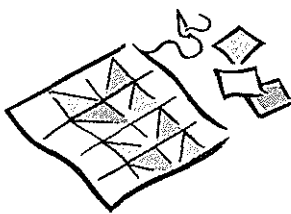


Following the arrival of white settlers, the Lumbee people began wearing European styles of clothing. Today, Lumbee people wear modern styles, but dress in the traditional attire of their ancestors for special occasions, ceremonies, and powwows.

## Music

Music has always been a very important part of the Lumbee culture. The Lumbee people celebrate with music, whether in the tradition of a powwow, singing within a group, or alone. Because so many of the Europeans who settled in North Carolina were Christians, gospel music was an influence on Lumbee music. Members of the Lumbee tribe still sing many of the spiritual hymns that were popular in the early 1800s.

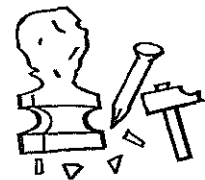
## Art



The long leaf pine tree is an important part of both North Carolina and Lumbee culture, and it is represented artistically by the handcrafted Lumbee patchwork which resembles the end of the long leaf pinecone. The patchwork is used in the design of Lumbee quilts, clothing, and rugs.

The Lumbee tribe was known for their beautiful carvings, baskets, beadwork and jewelry. Today many artists and craftspeople continue to make traditional pieces of art. Baskets are woven from long leaf pine needle, sweetgrass, white oak, and chinaberry bark. Other artisans carve gourds, turning them into everything from vases to dolls to masks. Making pottery from traditional coiling methods is still popular among Lumbee craftspeople.

Some Lumbee artists have made a mark in the area of fine art, including painting and clay sculpture. Former baseball player, Gene Locklear, is one of North Carolina's most respected painters.



## *Lumbee Tribe Review*

Answer the following:

1. The Lumbee tribe takes its name from what North Carolina River?
  - a. Catawba River
  - b. Lumbee River
  - c. Lumber River
  - d. Dan River
  - e. Cape Fear River
  - f. Yadkin River
  - g. Pee Dee River
  - h. b and c
2. True or false: The Lumbee tribe is the largest tribe in North Carolina.
3. Ancestors of the Lumbee people include the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ Indians.
4. It is believed the Croatan tribe lived and intermarried with the colonists of the \_\_\_\_\_ Colony.
5. What were two of the rights taken away from Native Americans in 1835?
6. What was the name of the first state-supported institution for higher education for Native Americans? What is the school called today?
7. In 1913, the Indians of Robeson County changed their name to the \_\_\_\_\_ Indians of Robeson County.
8. Name the three branches of Lumbee Tribal Government
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Lumbee recipes reflect both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ culture.
10. The Lumbee patchwork design used on quilts, clothing, and rugs is made to look like what object from nature?
  - a. a sunflower
  - b. a long leaf pinecone
  - c. a daisy
  - d. a tree