

# Indians at UNC

From page 1

only 10 to 15 Indian students on campus. But some students felt that Indians needed a central organization on the predominantly white campus. Students Forest Hazel, Kevin Maynor, Marsha Locklear and Joyce Kramer were instrumental in laying the foundation for the Circle.

"It's always a problem getting an organization started," Kramer said. "With any volunteer organization, you don't expect 100 percent participation. But we had a pretty good show. There were a lot more Indians on campus than we had anticipated."

Although the Circle had some problems receiving recognition, the problem quickly disappeared as the membership grew. Kramer said students began to put more time into the Circle. "Many realized where their

priorities were. It takes time and commitment. The Circle is not just a fling."

Kramer, who now is a UNC faculty member, continues to act as an adviser to the Indian students, as does Indian faculty member Cherry Beasley. But Kramer said she feels the organization should remain in the hands of the students.

*There were three freshmen last year who had grade point averages of 3.7, 3.2 and 3.0. They all dropped out and returned home.*

Joey Bell

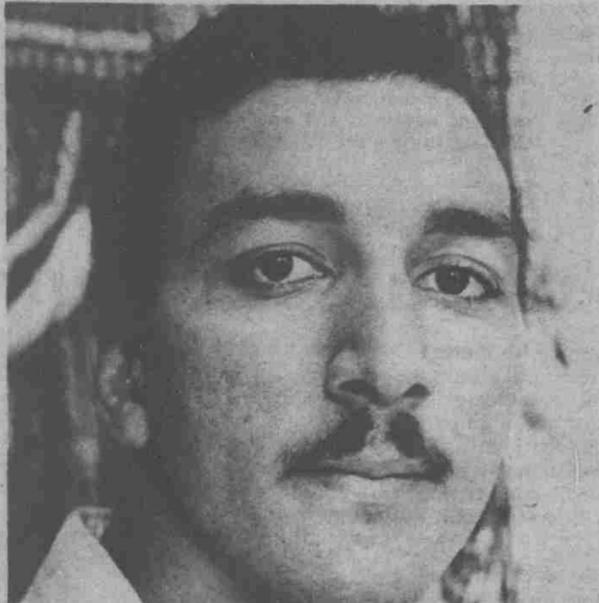
The Circle has increased its student membership to approximately 45 Indians, Bell said. The group has also evolved from just a social organization to one that works to educate others on campus about the Indian identity of today and to emphasize the ethnic heritage of its members.

"Ethnic pride is very important. We hope to instill in our members the pride in being an Indian and to promote our culture to inform others," Kramer said.

ONE way in which the Circle has tried to promote native American culture is through Indian Culture Week. Held each spring semester for the past five years, the week's activities range from native dances and outdoor drama in the Pit to films and guest speakers on Indian culture.

"It serves as a way to get the Indians on campus involved in a project as well as exposing the community to Indian culture and history," Bell said.

But there still exists a problem with Indian identity and stereotypes on Carolina's campus. Many people are aware of the presence of North Carolina's Cherokee tribes, Bell said. The Circle is composed not only of Cherokee Indians, but the Lumbee and



Carolina Indian Circle Chief Joey Bell

## Life tough on and off reservation

By MELODEE ALVES

IN the movies and the history books, Indian life on the reservation has been portrayed as hunting buffalo, making clothing from animal hides and living in teepees. While this may have been an accurate portrait during the days of America's forefathers, Indian life on a reservation is quite different today.

Janet Arch, a sophomore, grew up in Cherokee, a reservation in North Carolina. Cherokee is an isolated mountain community, but physically it resembles any other town in the state, she said.

"The government pays for the piece of land and puts you there. You build up the land, you can have it," Arch said.

The land is federally owned and it has been designated for Indians to live on.

Members of the Eastern Band Cherokee tribe don't practice all of the traditional customs and ideas as do some, such as the Navaho on reservations on the plains, Arch said, but a sense of Indian culture still runs through the community.

"Everybody here works together in helping each other. That's the way it was a long time ago," she said.

There are many people who work at various jobs during the day and who like to come home and tend a small farm or garden at night. "There's still a mixture of both (old and new) ways," Arch said.

Efforts to modernize the community have not all been to the advantage of the Indians on the reservation. Arch said the schools are accredited, but the education received in them is inferior.

Many students once were whipped for speaking in their native Cherokee language.

"If you are in the 11th grade in our school, you would probably get sent back to the ninth grade if you went to a public school. The teachers don't care, just as long as they get paid," she said.

Arch also said that some people tend to get lazy when they live on a reservation, because the government offers many assistance programs. "Indians who didn't grow up on a reservation already understand that you have to go out and fight for what you really want."

But having to fight for everything isn't exactly an edge that some Indians would like to have. Joey Bell, a senior, said growing up in the town of Pembroke was not all easy. Although Pembroke is heavily populated with Indians, the town is not a reservation and is not isolated from other ethnic groups.

"There is a small amount of tension when it comes to matters of civil rights," he said. "Some people have a tendency to look down on Indians."

But there is still a strong sense of kinship among the Indians who live in Pembroke, Bell said, because they all live in the same part of town.

Both Bell and Arch admit that whether an Indian is raised on a reservation or not, a knowledge of Indian heritage is always present.

"You've got the blood, but the way you think, that's what makes you know that you're an Indian," Arch said. "We may envy those who have preserved all of the traditional ways, but each has chosen what they want."



Coharie tribes as well. The Lumbee are reported to be the fifth largest tribe east of the Mississippi River, he said.

"Many people still believe that all Indians ride horseback and scalp people," Bell said. "Some also think that we all live on reservations and don't come to institutions like this."

Bell believes that this way of thinking has been one of the major causes of the low retention rate for Indians at Carolina. According to national statistics, only about 15 percent of the Indians who enter college graduate. Bell said the figure is only slightly higher here at UNC.

*'Many people still believe that all Indians ride horseback and scalp people. Some also think that we all live on reservations.'*

Joey Bell

"Most Indians who come up here are not used to stereotypes or people questioning their Indian heritage. I have had people come up to me and say 'You don't look like an Indian, man. You look more Spanish or Puerto Rican.' Back home, no one questioned you."

Home for most Carolina Indian students is Pembroke, which has a 95 percent Indian population. Many of the Indian students return home after their freshman year in college. Very strong home ties, rather than grades, are another factor in the low retention rate of Indians.

"There were three freshmen last year who had grade point averages of 3.7, 3.2 and 3.0. They all dropped out and returned home," Bell said.

"We're glad that the students maintain strong ties," Kramer said. "But we want them to get a full education and then go back home."

The Circle has tried to increase the incoming freshmen retention rate. Through such programs as the Project Program and Project relate with on campus with administrators in school students.

*The Circle works during the time, the Indian students*

Some students have had a hard time adjusting well by realizing they are different, Bell said. "The pressure and that the

Tanuel Kerns, a sophomore, has had a major influence in his life. "If they had not been here, I still have real

KERNs said the difference between the Indian and the white is neat to be different. "I think that I live in a

While Kerns' transition to college life has been rough, another has been rough. "I had a rough experience a rough time in my past years at school. I was very

"When I first got here, I was very nervous. I thought that we use back home things like 'It bees' when someone laughs at them, but I hurt inside of my ways. I was very

'Ethnic We meet Indians'

DTH/Scott Sharpe