

# THE CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE

Dedicated to the best in all of us

VOLUME 5 NUMBER 21  
Publication No. 978380

PEMBROKE, N.C.

THURSDAY, MAY 26, 1977

15¢ PER COPY

## ...About Lumbee Indians

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Recently Bryce Nelson, Midwest Bureau Chief for *The Los Angeles Times*, visited Robeson County and wrote a story about the Lumbee Indian community. The article, entitled "Lost Colony-Tribe Claims Key to Riddle of Roanoke," appeared in the May 12 issue of *The Los Angeles Times*.

We consider the article fairly accurate and reasonably well-written. We wish to share it with our readership. We gratefully acknowledge permission of *The Los Angeles Times* to reprint the article.

### 'LOST COLONY'

## Tribe Claims Key to Riddle of Roanoke

BY BYRCE NELSON  
Times Staff Writer

PEMBROKE, N.C.—"We're an anthropological delight; everybody comes to study us," said Bruce Barton, a Lumbee Indian, who edits the weekly *Carolina Indian Voice* here.

Taking note of his own appearance, Barton added, "And you can see with these curly locks and pale complexion that something strange has been going on here."

Most Lumbee Indians believe that the complexion of many members of their tribe provides the answer to the riddle of what happened almost four centuries ago to Sir Walter Raleigh's "Lost Colony" of settlers.

The Lumbee Indians, whose home for centuries has been the swamps of southeastern North Carolina, have no federal reservation of their own, but an estimated 40,000 of them live here in Robeson County and surrounding counties. Thousands more live in other parts of the United States, including several hundred in the Los Angeles area.

The Lumbees are by far the largest Indian group east of the Mississippi, one of the largest tribes in the nation, and, by all recent accounts, one of the most successful economically.

"I have seen tremendous accomplishments here I would never have believed possible in an Indian community in the United States," said Vine Deloria Jr., a Standing Rock Sioux and an acclaimed writer on Indian topics.

Deloria, who grew up on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, spoke recently to a Lumbee group here on a humid, Southern spring day. He called upon the Lumbees to produce the next generations and communicators to tell the story of American Indians to the rest of the world. He said only the Lumbees and the Iroquois have the educational base to produce a large number of such specialists.

Though little noticed, the Lumbees have started to make dramatic improvements, in the last few years, in their economic, political and educational position.

The Lumbees, who never engaged in large-scale battles with the whites and who were never conquered by whites or put on reservations, adopted the white man's language, life-style and Baptist and Methodist religions so long ago that no one remembers when anything was different.

Jimmy Carter would feel right at home listening to the soft, Southern accents of Lumbee tobacco farmers or attending the well-built churches of the Lumbee Baptists.

And, in fact, most Lumbees think there is good reason for Southern families descended from the English to feel right at home with them.

The firm belief of many Lumbees, and a fair number of Indian and white historians, is that the Lumbee people are the descendants of an amalgam of the Hatteras Indians and the 117

## Town Manager Complains of Trooper Brutality and Abuse of Power

Pembroke's town manager, McDuffie Cummings, has found himself at odds with two troopers of the N.C. State Highway Patrol concerning an arrest made in front of his house on April 22, 1977 "in front of my children."

O'Neill Oxendine, on April 22, was arrested by state troopers, Hubert Covington and T.J. Evelyn, on charges of drunken driving, driving without a valid operator's license and resisting arrest.

The incident occurred on Union Chapel Road in front of the home of Pembroke Town Manager, McDuffie Cummings. Cummings has complained to Sgt. G.D. Dodson of the area highway patrol office in Lumberton, District Attorney Joe Freeman Britt, Governor Jim Hunt, and Col. John Jenkins, recently named head of the North Carolina Highway Patrol.

In a letter to Col. Jenkins, McDuffie Cummings stated:

"On the 22nd day of April, 1977, while cutting the grass in my front lawn, I witnessed two state troopers, without hats, conducting a traffic check less than 100 feet from my position. A car with a lone male occupant approached the trooper's position slowly and executed a right turn about 30 to 40 feet in front of them, driving under the carport of a nearby house. One of the troopers, Covington, approached the auto and engaged the driver in conversation. The driver then got out of the auto and placed his hands on the auto while Trooper Covington conducted a search of his person. He then walked with the trooper, voluntarily and without any resistance whatsoever, over to the passenger side of one of the patrol autos about 40 feet away. At this time the person involved, whom I recognized as O'Neill Oxendine, was confronted by the other trooper, Evelyn, who began talking to Oxendine in what appeared to be based on his gestures, flushed face and posture an angry tone of voice. Evelyn, while leaning forward, put his left finger in Oxendine's chest, then striking Oxendine in the face with the fist of his other hand. This was done without any

provocation or resistance on the part of Oxendine. Oxendine attempted to defend himself and he was then attacked by Covington, being struck by the trooper's convoy. Oxendine fell and while on the ground with Covington on top, he was struck solidly on the back of the head by Evelyn.

"Appalled by the savagery of the two troopers involved, I now was in the immediate vicinity of Oxendine, Evelyn and Covington. Oxendine, now handcuffed, said: 'I'll get in the back seat.' Evelyn tartly responded: 'No you'll get in the front seat or I'll put some more knots on your head.' I then began to get the numbers of the two patrol cars; they being H451 and H452. Covington said: 'Mister if you would have asked we would have given you the numbers.' I responded by saying that I now had the numbers. Covington then said: 'I thought that you thought that we had done something wrong.' I responded by saying that I thought that the troopers had provoked the violence. Covington responded by saying: 'If you have a complaint place it with the sergeant.' He then asked Evelyn to call the sergeant for me. Evelyn responded by saying: 'I have to go look this drunk up. If you (meaning myself) have a complaint get in your car and go make it.' Evelyn then looked at my panel truck across the road and said: 'Home Florist.' After nodding his head, he said again: 'Home Florist.' To which remarks Covington responded by saying: 'I patrol this area, don't worry; nothing will be done about it.' Evelyn then said in a slurring manner: 'Since you are such a friend of his (Oxendine), would you mind looking after his car?'

"After the two troopers left I went immediately to the Pembroke Police Station, where I asked the dispatcher on duty to call the local Sergeant of the Highway Patrol. Sgt. Hathcock answered by saying that he was off duty but that Sgt. Dennings was working. About an hour later he arrived with a lieutenant whose name I do not recall. The following Wednesday, Sgt. Dennings and Sgt. Dodson were back in touch with myself.

Since the incident in question there have been several traffic checks at the very same location. On April 30 three troopers were checking traffic. I noticed that should anyone drive into a house in the vicinity a trooper would immediately go into rapid pursuit and come to a sliding stop at the residence to which the auto in question had stopped. On one occasion a trooper drove through my father's yard to get to a nearby mobile home, even though the mobile home had its own driveway to the public road.

"On May 2nd I passed Trooper Evelyn at a stationary position while going home for supper. He recognized me and followed me to Sandy Plains Church, which is almost directly in front of my home, where he parked. After supper, approximately twenty minutes later around 6:30 P.M., while leaving my home, I noticed that Trooper Evelyn and another trooper were conducting a traffic check at the identical spot of the original incident.

"I find it interesting that the troopers involved in the original incident, Covington and Evelyn, did not take Oxendine to the Pembroke Police Department for a breathalyzer test even though the station is only three or four miles from the scene of the arrest. The Pembroke Police Station has a breathalyzer and a qualified operator is available. Given the fact that Pembroke is a predominantly Indian town and that the two troopers had just savagely beaten an Indian without cause or provocation, I can only question whether racism did not rear its ugly head. I have it on reliable information that Trooper Covington stated that he was going to police in and around Pembroke in order to 'straighten things out' in that he did not feel that our resident trooper, Clyde Fields, was severe enough in his handling of the local population.

"Further, may I say that the troopers involved kept Oxendine at the Sheriff's Department for approximately one and

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## ROBESON COUNTY STILL HOME TO MEMBER OF GEORGIA COMMISSION ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

by Connee Draybois

Many factors contribute to the uniqueness of Lumbee Indians. One of the most remarkable characteristics of Indian nature is his emotional link with home. No matter how far away from Robeson County a Lumbee is forced to go in his search for identity or whatever, he invariably calls Robeson County "home." After all, home is where the heart is.

Many factors are involved in the reasons for Lumbee migration. Among them are racial discrimination, inferior school system, and the unfair, unequal and unjust treatment of minorities in this unique tri-racial county. For various reasons Lumbees do migrate into other states and sometimes other countries where there is less stress and oppression. Away from the psychological, emotional, mental, and economic oppression which prevails in Robeson, a Lumbee finds that he can become quite successful in an atmosphere where a person's ability and his worth as a human being are not measured by the hue of

his complexion. Of the unknown number of Lumbees who do migrate, a fantastic amount of them are quite successful in their endeavors.

James W. Oxendine is an example of one of many Lumbees who have migrated and obtained noticeable success in various fields.

On Tuesday, May 18, 1977, Oxendine was sworn in as a member of the Georgia Commission on Indian Affairs. This newly-formed Commission is comprised of seven members: two Creek Indians, two Cherokees, two whites and one Lumbee. Oxendine was appointed by Governor George Busbee to a four-year term. Oxendine was selected as vice-chairman at the organizational meeting following the swearing in ceremonies. He was sworn in by the chairman, Bill Dover, who is a member of the Georgia Legislature.

Oxendine, a very personable man, recalled

his years in Robeson County. He was born in 1927 in the Fairmont Community to the late Roy and Betty Oxendine, life long residents of Robeson County.

He attended Fairmont Indian School (now known as Fairgrove School) and graduated from there in 1945 as salutatorian of his class.

He reflected happily on his childhood in rural Robeson County. His parents, he said, were tenant farmers for the Floyds of Fairmont. He remembered the hard times they had as a family, but he also recalled the love they shared. In a moment of rare melancholy he spoke of his deceased mother. Said he, "My mother was the wife of a tenant farmer. We were very poor, but she gave me something more than money. She taught me things about life... She gave me some good advice, advise I have heeded. She told me 'to work hard. Do the best you can. And don't be ashamed of what you are.' And I have never forgotten that. That was the best advice I ever received and my life is evidence that she was right. She taught me pride in myself."

We then talked about his years at Fairmont Indian School. He expressed his belief that teachers were the backbone of the nation. He spoke fondly of his teachers and revealed the influence they had had on his life. Said he, "I feel a great sense of loyalty to the teaching profession. This stems from my personal experience with them. I know what dedicated, caring teachers did for me."

And he continued, "Education is the key that unlocks all doors. Without teachers we can't have doctors and lawyers."

He spoke lovingly of three teachers in particular who had great influence on the direction of his life: Mrs. Mary Deese Lowry, his only English teacher; Mrs. Ruby Dial, his fifth grade teacher; and the late Mrs. Opal Hunt, his seventh grade teacher. He said in reference to the late Mrs. Hunt, "She probably kept me in

James B. Chavis

becomes N.C.'s

Chief Ombudsman



Dr. James B. Chavis

—A citizen receives notice from the Unemployment Bureau two months after she made application for benefits, stating she is ineligible. An investigation reveals Job Service mishandled her claim. She receives her first unemployment check within a few days.

—An inmate is beaten and tear gassed at a penitentiary. After an investigation, the actions are deemed inappropriate and illegal and two correction officers are fired.

—A workers compensation claimant reports he is not receiving weekly disability benefits as promised. After a short inquiry, the claimant receives past due checks from the Director of Disability Compensation.

These problems were solved by the Citizen's Advocate, Citizen's Aide and Ombudsman in various states. The names vary, but they all help citizens deal with the labyrinth of government bureaucracies at local, state and federal levels.

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## Heavy Rains

### Reroute Traffic, Close Schools, Threaten Crops

It rained buckets full Tuesday and the recent laments of "boy, we could stand some rain" changed quickly to "gosh, I hope this rainfall stops soon. We needed a little rain but this is more than we asked for."

Rain especially caused problems in the Pembroke area, forcing the closing of Pembroke Elementary and Pembroke Junior High School. In some areas around Maynor Manor, row boats were actually used to transfer workers from their home to work.

Rainfall measured as much as 7 inches in some places in the county. The heavy rainfall caused flooding and the roads were lined with stranded vehicles, most with drowned motors.

Rerouting was the order of the day early Wednesday morning as Robesonians went to work. Many found huge gullies of water in the middle of the road and many searched the by ways for new routes to old places.

Farmers were concerned about damage to crops, especially tobacco. The rains threatened, if immediate drainage were not provided, to drown the young tobacco plants and other crops.

According to reports, the Pembroke Rescue Squad evacuated a number of families from Maynor Manor in Pembroke.

Many secondary roads in the county were found to be impassable early Wednesday morning. The area between Fairmont and Pembroke was especially affected by the heavy rainfall.

By late Wednesday afternoon, the rains were abated but the forecast was more rain.

Said a farmer, "It beats all. One week we don't get enough rain and the next we get too much."

## people and places and things

### BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC TO BE HELD AT PROSPECT SCHOOL

The Prospect Career Club is sponsoring a Blood Pressure, Breadth and Self-Breast Assessment Clinic at Prospect School in the Gym on Sunday, May 29, 1977 from 2-5p.m. The clinic is free to the public.

Special specialists will be Dr. Frank Warrick and Dr. Benford Hardin. Nurses will be Ms. Judy Hunt, RN, Ms. Charlena Strickland, RN, Ms. Juren, RN, Ms. Barbara McMillian, RN, Ms. Otha Sweet, RN, and Certified Family Planning nurse Practitioner and Ms. Maxine Deese, student nurse.

Free educational materials will be provided, compliments of the American Cancer Society.

### LOWRY ATTENDS SALES CONVENTION OF NATIONWIDE INSURANCE AGENTS

Willie Von Lowry, agent for Nationwide Insurance at College Street in Pembroke has been invited to the largest sales convention in Nationwide's 51-year history in June at Columbus, Ohio.

About 5,000 people...agents, field managers, and members of the their families...will attend Nationwide's first company-wide sales gathering since 1958.

Guest speaker at the three-day conclave will be Howard K. Smith, the American Broadcasting Company's prize-winning news commentator, and Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, widely-acclaimed author, lecturer and minister.

A convention highlight will be tours through Nationwide Plaza, Nationwide's new 40-story home office complex in downtown Columbus. The Plaza is the largest office facility in Central Ohio.

Lowry, who has been a Nationwide agent for six years, earned the invitation through outstanding sales and customer service during the year. He will be accompanied to the convention by his wife.

### ROBESON COUNTY ACT OFFICERS INSTALLED

On Monday afternoon, May 23, the Robeson County Association of Classroom Teachers met for the final business meeting of the year, and for the installation of new officers for 1977-78.

Ms. LaRue Jones administered the oath of office to president, Ms. Ira Lee Lowry, Long Branch School; president-elect, Ms.

## Pembroke To Be Featured on 'Carolina At Noon'

The TV-6 Mobile Color Studio recently paid a visit to Pembroke, NC for a taping of a "Carolina at Noon" special, to be aired Tuesday, June 7 on WECT-TV.

This remote telecast features interviews at the Lumbee Regional Development Association (LRDA) and Pembroke State University as well as preview of the popular outdoor drama about the Lumbee Indian hero Henry Berry Lowry, "Strike at the Wind!"

The first segment of the show, taped at the LRDA Annex office, describes the various programs organized by the association. These programs, including senior citizen groups, child care, and "Right to Read" classes for illiterate adults, are run by and for the Lumbee Indians.

LRDA operates on a three million dollar budget, financed through federal, state, and local agencies. The organization is dedicated to improving the quality of life and cultural heritage for the Lumbees, who comprise approximately 97% of the local population.

Jim Burns discusses the association with Ken Maynor, Executive Director, and Rev. James Harold Woods, Chairman of the Board for LRDA.

Pembroke State University is spotlighted next. This segment

Carrie Currence, Southside School, vice-president, Mr. William Lloyd Hunt, Orum High School; secretary, Ms. Doris Bethea, Southside School; treasurer, Ms. Jacqueline McCormick, Deep Branch School.

President's Committee Chairpersons for the year 77-78 are: Citizenship Committee, Mr. George Chavis of Prospect School; Elections Committee, Ms. Tessie Hunt of Magnolia School; Instruction and Professional Development (IPD), Ms. Melinda Johnson, Piney Grove School; Legislative Committee, Ms. Linda Simuel of Proctorville School; Professional Rights and Responsibilities (PR&R), Ms. LaRue Jones of Proctorville School; Public Relations, Ms. Carrie Currence, Southside School; Resolutions Committee, Ms. Queenie Mae Lowry; Union Chapel School; Social Committee, Ms. Loretta Smith of Long Branch School.

In the brief acceptance remarks Mrs. Ira Lee Lowry challenged the ACT membership to "Take a giant step forward" here in Robeson County to further the cause for "Freedom to Teach—a Thrust for Children."

### AND PREPARE FOR THE STATE PLAYOFFS

The Warriors were supposed to begin their quest for the state 3-A Championship Tuesday night but the rains came and the game has been canceled. The game has tentatively been rescheduled for tonight (Thursday) but no one was taking any bets on it at press time. The sky still threatened more rain as the Carolina Indian Voice rolled off the presses.

The Pembroke Warriors are to meet Clinton in the first game of playoff action for the state crown.

The game is tentatively scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on the Pembroke State University diamond.

### REGISTRATION FOR PSU SUMMER SCHOOL BEGINS TUESDAY

Pembroke State University will have registration on Tuesday, May 31, with classes beginning the same day.

Registration will be from 8:15 until noon in the Auxiliary Gymnasium of the Jones Health and Physical Education Center. Classes begin that same afternoon with class periods changed for that day only to the following times—first period—1-1:50; second period—2-2:50; third period—3-3:50; fourth period—4-4:50; and fifth period—5-5:50 p.m.

examines the growth in buildings, programs, and faculty experienced in the past few years by the university. Jim's guest, Dr. English E. Jones, who is Chancellor of Pembroke State, discusses the past achievements and the institution's goals for the future, including the planned reconstruction of the landmark building, "Old Main," as TV-6 cameras take an informal tour of Pembroke's new buildings.

Randy Umberger's outdoor drama "Strike at the Wind" is shown in rehearsal during the third segment of TV-6's "Visit to Pembroke." Production Chief Rock Kershaw describes the stirring story of Henry Berry Lowry and its importance to the Lumbees, while our cameras capture the play's director, Arthur MacDonald, and his actors in their preparation for the summer run ahead, MacDonald

also directs the Department of Dramatic Arts at St. Andrew's University.

"Strike at the Wind" has a cast of 60 and an original musical score. "Carolina at Noon" will present the company in two of the show's major musical numbers.

WECT-TV's "Carolina at Noon" features different communities every month. "A Visit to Pembroke" is the nineteenth remote for the popular program hosted by Jim Burns, which can be seen on TV-6 weekdays at noon.



James W. Oxendine, left, is shown with his only brother, William L. Oxendine, at the recent athletic awards banquet sponsored by the Pembroke Senior High School Warriors Booster Club. (Bruce Barton photo)

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