

DEEP BRANCH QUEENS



Teresa Carter, Junior Miss Deep Branch School.



Coretta Chavis, Little Miss Deep Branch School.

Lumbees. But despite the fact that other Indians have been turned down, Lumbees point out that no other tribe has been systematically denied.

ANNE GREEN, the commission director, admitted the commission will not accept Lumbees unless they are recognized by the federal government. This policy was adopted in late 1976 after Hillman, the former director, approved the waiver for a Lumbee student named Grady Locklear Jr. Hillman says he approved Locklear without consulting the commission because that body would not meet until two months after Locklear applied.

The commission then met and determined that federal recognition would be required for Lumbee applicants because the tribe had no rolls by which to verify the blood quantum.

Phil Alexis, chairman of the commission, pointed out Lumbees are a North Carolina tribe, adding the waiver was intended for Michigan tribes. "We don't say Lumbees aren't eligible, we just say they have no way to prove the blood quantum," he said.

Janet Howard, an aide to State Sen. Jackie Vaughn, who drafted the waiver bill, said the commission is responsible for verifying blood quantum through tribal associations. The major tribes among the estimated 17,000 Indians in Michigan (Chippewa, Potawatomi and Ottawa) are federally recognized.

"We were thinking of tribes native to Michigan (when writing the bill), but it can apply to other tribes that are verified. And the tribal association seems the logical way to verify that," Ms. Howard said.

To Lumbees, and to other sympathetic Indians, this smacks of discrimination. Nancy Wilson, a Potawatomi Indian in St. Clair Shores who is active in five area Indian groups, detects a definite bias towards Lumbees and other non-reservation tribes.

"We are all Indians, regardless of our past history," she said. "Some people don't approve of Lumbees, but I don't approve of everybody on the commission, either."

Federal recognition, of course, would solve the problem. The BIA in Washington has before it two petitions from Lumbee groups seeking recognition. But Shapard, who is in charge of such petitions for BIA, says he is awaiting further documentation from the groups. And he adds that recognition is a lengthy process because of the 60 tribes now applying.

In Pembroke, the LRDA is now collecting data to create its own roll from birth, marriage, death and other records. But Maynor, the LRDA head, concedes that he faces at least a 10-year process because of the 40,000 Lumbees in Robeson County alone. And there is no guarantee the Michigan commission would accept such a roll.

Meanwhile, Michigan's Lumbees seethe at the commission. They are members of a tribe that in 1958 drew international acclaim for smashing a Ku Klux Klan rally, a tribe that was among the nation's first to own and farm land, to produce doctors and lawyers and to build its own university. It is a tribe proud of such little things as a book of Lumbee poetry and art put together by Lumbee high school students.

Harriett Locklear is the mother of Grady Locklear Jr., the Lumbee who slipped past the commission in 1976 and got the tuition waiver at Eastern Michigan University. Mrs. Locklear now has another son who is considering college and the waiver.

"It's our right," she said of the waiver. "If my son wants it, I'll fight the commission all the way. I'd take it to court. I'm a fighter."

SEE RELATED STORY

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Left to right are: Shelly Yuhus, first runner up in the Junior Miss; Mary Funnell Locklear, third runner up; Candace Lovry, second runner up; Sabrina Burns, outgoing Junior Miss Deep Branch; Teresa Maria Carter, Junior Miss Deep Branch; Coretta Chavis, Little Miss Deep Branch; Karen Scott, outgoing Little Miss Deep Branch; Rebecca Holden, Little Miss Deep Branch, first runner up; and Laciody Locklear, Little Miss Deep Branch, 2nd runner up.



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EDITORIAL AND OPINION PAGE...



We Cannot Know Where We Are Going If We Don't Know Where We've Been... So fittingly we honor our Pioneer Fathers

As I See It by Bruce Barton

EDITOR'S NOTE: Everyone wishes to be recognized for what they are, not what someone else thinks they are or wants them to be. Wherever one goes the need to be, to belong, to be treated decently, remains locked with in the breast, nestled up against the heart. And so it is in Michigan and in other places where Indians from Robeson County have gone looking for a better life.

And those who would label and deny and discriminate and take away ones birthright awaits their arrival. In Michigan Indians from Robeson County and elsewhere are being discriminated against by the state, and ironically, the Michigan Commission of Indian Affairs (sic).

In Michigan those Indians who can prove their Indian-ness are granted tuition waivers in Michigan schools. Also, the plight of non-federally recognized Lumbee Indians has followed them to Michigan. The Michigan Commission of Indian Affairs refuses to recognize them as "real" Indians.

People need to rally around this cause and work diligently to change Michigan's antiquated policy toward her Indian citizens. And God knows they need a sympathetic Commission of Indian Affairs, not one like they have now that practices racism of a very base form.

Here's an edited article by David Zucchino, a former writer with the Raleigh News and Observer. He now writes for the Detroit Free Press. The article is self explanatory.

This article explains the situation fairly. We'll follow in the weeks to come and with more information and rallying points. For now, with elections just completed, and not enough time to put together something ourselves, we have opted to share this excellent article with you.

Consider Zucchino our guest columnist, compliments of the Detroit Free Press, of course. This article appeared in the Friday, December 21, 1979 issue. We are reprinting it for the edification of our readership.

The plight of the Indians of Michigan and other places makes federal recognition absolutely necessary if Indians are to survive in these troubled times. More in weeks to follow.

WANTED! Contestants for the 1980 "LITTLE MISS LUMBEE PAGEANT," sponsored by Lumbee Regional Development Association. Anyone interested in entering their daughter in the pageant can obtain applications from Monroe Chavis at LRDA Annex or Patricia Jacobs at Revels Motel Complex Right to Read Office #14. Child must be between 4 to 6 years of age and must be Indian (at least one parent must be Indian). This year's performance will be held at Pembroke State University's Performing Arts Center. If there are any questions concerning the Little Miss Lumbee Pageant, do not hesitate to call Monroe Chavis at 321-2401 or Patricia Jacobs at 321-3325 or 3326.

Michigan's Lumbee Indians: On the outside looking in

By DAVID ZUCCHINO, Free Press Staff Writer. Flora Mooney, heir to a line of Lumbee Indian blood as rich as the red soil of that tribe's homeland on the North Carolina coastal plain, is a woman in search of an education. She first entered college in 1969. She is today, at 28, still an hour short of an associate degree in psychology.

A lack of money had broken the intervening years into spurts of study and long periods of working to help support her three children in Clinton Township. In the summer of 1977, she was buoyed by a new tuition waiver offered to Indians by the State of Michigan. She applied, hoping to lay a financial base to again enter school.

The Michigan Commission on Indian Affairs turned her down flatly. She was told, she recalls now, that Lumbees were ineligible for the waiver because they could not prove they were Indians.

This was news to Mrs. Mooney. Her parents, their parents and their parents before them were Lumbee Indians. She had in her possession a letter from a Lumbee association saying she is "of 100 percent Indian blood" and due the "privileges of that proud race." But what truly surprised Mrs. Mooney was the race of the commission members. They were all Indians.

The commission's denial of Mrs. Mooney and a handful of other Lumbees living in Michigan has spawned an undercurrent of bitterness among the approximately 2,000 Lumbees in the Detroit area. A few Lumbees say the commission, and some Michigan tribes, are prejudiced against Lumbees because of their mixed blood — Indian, black and white. Others claim opposing tribes jealously guard their own benefits by denying Lumbees their Indian ancestry.

The issue arises at a time when Indians are claiming their special economic slice of America. "Indians are very sensitive right now that people claiming to be Indians really are Indians. The Indian pie is only so big," pointed out James Hillman, a former Indian commission director who in 1977 qualified the first — and last — Lumbee for the waiver.

FOR THOSE LUMBEES on the outside looking in, their denial has meant delays in education and, in some cases, no education at all.

For Vergie Locklear, a Lumbee from Warren, the commission's intransigence led her son, James, to give up his hopes of attending a Christian college. Divorced and the mother of four children, Mrs. Locklear saved precious little in the way of college money from her tire-factory job. When she learned the commission refused Lumbees, she and James gave up on college. He is laid off from a milk-company job now.

The commission's 1978 denial of Lori Peters, 19, the daughter of Elizabeth Locklear Peters, did not preclude Lori's enrollment in college. But Mrs. Peters, who has two other daughters yet to be educated, finds the commission's stance unfair.

"I have a letter verifying my birth and origin (as a Lumbee), but they didn't even consider it," she says. And for Flora Mooney, who believes she would have finished college by now had she received the waiver, her denial has left her hurt and angry. "I'd like to know where the tuition money is going if not to Lumbee Indians," she says now. Adelaide Locklear, mother of Flora Mooney, says she knows an Indian when she sees one. She says she can trace seven generations on her father's side and nine on her mother's, all of them as purely Indian as anyone on the commission, as evidenced by her daughter's black eyes and high cheekbones. "It infuriates me that there are Lumbee families in Detroit whose children didn't go on to college because they couldn't afford it," she says. "Here's this waiver for just that purpose — and other Indians have the nerve to tell us we're not Indians just because we're not reservation Indians."

TO UNDERSTAND the perplexing nuances of the tribe's denial, one must first understand the singular history of the Lumbee, a tribe of protean identity. As early as the 17th century, Scottish settlers encountered Indians in what is now Robeson County, N.C., who spoke English and embraced European customs. Some had mixed with escaped black slaves, others with earlier white settlers.

A few historians theorize that the tribe intermarried with white settlers of England's famous "Lost Colony" of coastal Carolina, which vanished without a trace in 1587. Whatever the truths of history, the Lumbees were never forced like most other tribes onto white-dictated reservations. Now, as perhaps the most assimilated of American Indians into mainstream American society, they comprise the largest Indian tribe east of the Mississippi.

After World War II, some Lumbees joined the migrations of southerners northward to Detroit and jobs in the auto plants. It is their children and grandchildren who now demand the tuition waiver available, in theory, to all Indians.

MICHIGAN'S PUBLIC ACT 885, the tuition waiver act, seems a law open to interpretation. Passed in 1976, it offers free tuition to an American Indian who is (1) admitted to an accredited state school, (2) has been a legal resident of Michigan for 12 months and (3) is not less than one-quarter quantum blood Indian as certified by the person's tribal association and verified by the Indian commission.

In the case of Lumbees, the commission does not accept as certification blood proof offered by the Lumbee Regional Development Association (LRDA) of Pembroke, N.C. Yet that non-profit agency is considered by Lumbees — and some federal agencies — as the Lumbee tribal association. It was the LRDA which provided blood proof certification for Mrs. Mooney and other Michigan Lumbees.

The federal government has bestowed 40 college scholarships and 20 graduate scholarships on Lumbee students, using the LRDA as the certifying agency. The government also sends \$3 million a year in CETA employment, special education, adult education and local aid money to the LRDA — all designed specifically for American Indians.

"The LRDA is indeed the tribal association as far as CETA is concerned. They're Indians and they're non-profit," says Raymond Bobb, a U.S. Department of Labor official who handles Indian grants.

WHY THEN DOES the Michigan commission refuse to recognize the LRDA, and thus the Lumbees?

In essence, because the federal government has not officially recognized the Lumbees. According to John "Bud" Shapard of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Lumbees were never put on a reservation and thus never had a treaty — i.e., recognition — with the U.S. Yet the Michigan tuition waiver-law does not require that an applicant's tribe be federally recognized.

Annie Green, acting director of the Michigan commission, says the issue goes deeper than mere recognition. Because the Lumbees were not reservation Indians, she says, their bloodlines were never documented by the white Indian agents sent out by the U.S. government in the late 1800s and early 1900s to create a "roll" of reservations.

Such a notion amuses and infuriates Lumbees. "We've got white men in Washington deciding what an Indian is," says Dexter Brooks, Lumbee attorney in North Carolina. (Shapard, of the BIA, says there are "50 definitions of 'Indian' floating around Washington.")

But more infuriating to Lumbees here is what they call "10 little Indians" (the Indian commission) decreeing that Lumbees are not Indians. Some, like Frederick Boyd, a Detroit Cree Indian and a gadfly of sorts in local Indian affairs, charge racism.

Kenneth Maynor, head of the LRDA, said the commission's actions reflect "a blatantly racist attitude." Maynor, a Lumbee, added: "They're scared to death we're going to cut them out of benefits due all Indians."

Hillman, the ex-director of the commission and now head of the Detroit Indian Center, believes the racism is more subtle. "A lot of Indians in Michigan go out of their way to fight against recognition for Lumbees. They don't consider Lumbees Indians because of their mixed blood."

But Hillman, who calls the Lumbee a "tribe in limbo," sympathizes with the commission's position. Because the Lumbees have no tribal rolls, he says, anyone can claim to be a Lumbee.

"Anybody blond and blue-eyed can claim he's one-fourth Norwegian," Hillman said. "Same thing with Indians. I mean, there's no one way a Lumbee 'looks.'"

CURIOUSLY, other states do recognize the Lumbees as Indians. North Carolina, of course, is one. And Louisiana has an Indian tuition waiver bill almost identical to Michigan's. Lumbees have been granted the waiver there, based on quarter-blood certification by the LRDA.

Pete Morrow, a Tunica-Biloxi Indian who heads the Louisiana Bureau of Indian Affairs, said 80 percent of that state's tribes are not recognized by the U.S. government. "If we made federal recognition or a tribal roll the criteria, we wouldn't certify many Indians," he said.

In Michigan, according to commission figures, about 600 of the 2,000 applicants for the waiver have been rejected, almost all for a lack of verification. About a half dozen were



ARTISTIC COMPOSITION BY Justin H. Ransom. This sketch was done by Justin H. Ransom, a Lumbee Indian high school student in Pembroke, N.C.