

Editorial and Opinion Page

The Tribal Government Supports Tribal Unity, According to Speaker of Lumbee Tribal Council, Lance Harding, Jr.

Dear Editor
 In June of this year members of the Lumbee Tribal Council and the Tribal Chairman, along with other tribal members met with U. S. Rep. Mike McIntyre to discuss federal recognition. Two bills were discussed. One bill, strongly favored by LRDA, would grant federal recognition while naming LRDA as the tribal governing body. This bill was sponsored by Mr. Charlie Rose in 1996, but died in the Congress. The other bill, strongly favored by the tribal government, is the original Lumbee bill that grants federal recognition without naming a tribal governing body.

The tribal government spoke in behalf of the original Lumbee bill which extended recognition to the Lumbee people without naming a tribal governing body. This is the bill that has previously passed twice in the U. S. House of Representatives and, until a couple of years ago, had the support of LRDA. That bill, too, died in the Congress, having failed to win passage in the United States Senate.

I asked Mr. McIntyre about the possibilities of getting any bill through the Congress, given the

long standing opposition of Senator Helms. Mr. McIntyre stated that he thought he could get a Lumbee bill through the House, but felt that the bill would have great difficulty in the Senate. The meeting ended with a consensus that it would be unproductive to attempt passage of a Lumbee bill in the Congress, given the political make up of this Congress.

There is another option: For the past few years the Lumbee Tribal Government has supported a general recognition procedure bill sponsored by Rep. Eni Faleomavaega. This bill is also supported by 90% or more of those tribes that are seeking federal recognition. This bill changes the BIA process for federal recognition by making that process more sensible and workable. It also creates an independent commission to review petitions for federal recognition. Some time ago, we asked Mr. McIntyre to co-sponsor that bill, and encouraged his office to get LRDA on board to support the bill. As your readership already knows from previous news coverage, Mr. McIntyre is a co-sponsor of that bill.

We are concerned about the

progress of the general recognition bill. This Congress will adjourn at the end of next year. Any bill not passed at that time will have to be reintroduced when Congress convenes in 1999. Senator Daniel Inouye, ranking minority member of the United States Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs, also supports reform legislation on the BIA process. We believe that there is significant support in the Congress for reform legislation. We are optimistic that legislation will be eventually passed to correct the existing flaws in the BIA process.

We believe that this bill may offer the best opportunity for Lumbee recognition, given the position of Senator Helms. Mr. Helms is opposed to the recognition of Lumbee by legislation. He prefers the tribe to go through the BIA process. Should the bill be enacted, the tribal government would have no objection to going through the BIA process, as desired by Mr. Helms.

The Tribal Government supports tribal unity. We believe that when the overwhelming majority of Lumbee people vote in favor of something, it should be upheld. In

1994, the Lumbee people adopted a tribal constitution by a vote of 8040 for and 223 against. In Lumbee Tribe vs. LRDA, Inc. the Lumbee Tribal Government has asked the Court to issue a declaratory ruling on the 1994 tribal election. LRDA asked the Court to dismiss the case, and the Court refused. Ordinarily, the next step would have been the trial of the case. In this instance, however, LRDA appealed to the NC Court of Appeals.

In the LRDA brief to the Court of Appeals, LRDA contends that it enjoys tribal immunity from lawsuits. The Lumbee Tribal Government agrees that the Lumbee Tribe is immune from lawsuits as a sovereign state recognized tribe. However, the lawsuit is brought against LRDA, Inc., a private non-profit corporation, and not the Lumbee Tribe. We believe private corporations, including those of charitable intentions, do not hold the sovereignty of an Indian tribe.

The tribal government is willing to work with any private corporation or organization where there is respect for the sovereignty of the Lumbee people. We must never

forget that a crucial element of that sovereignty is the right of the Lumbee people to self-government. All negotiations done by the tribal government is done under the authority that has been specifically granted to them by the Lumbee people. This authority is expressed in the Lumbee Tribal Constitution. That authority does not empower the Lumbee Tribal Government to change or amend the will of the Lumbee people, as expressed in the Lumbee Tribal Constitution.

We continue to look for ways that builds unity among our people. That unity must be based upon respect for the rights of the Lumbee people. When the Lumbee people speak through the democratic election process, as they did in 1994, we are honor-bound to listen, to heed, and to obey. We encourage Dr. Dean Chavers and Mr. Leon Jacobs to help through these difficult times. Both men have given a lot toward the recognition of the Lumbee people, and deserve our respect and thanks.

Sincerely,
 Lance Harding, Jr., Speaker
 Lumbee Tribal Council

Cultural Festival Sept. 26-28

Metrolina Native American Assoc. Non-profit (3C) Organization, serving 10 counties in the Metrolina Area, proudly presents the 14th Annual Indian Trail Pow-Wow September 26-28, 1997, at the Indian Trail School, in the Indian Trail, NC.

Over twenty-five Artist and Traders, Dancers, Singers and Drummers from all over the US and Canada will be performing through out the event. The Pow-Wow opens Friday, Sept. 26 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. On Saturday we will open at 11 a.m. and close at 9 p.m. On Sunday, open at 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Donations at the gate will be appreciated.

Thank You in advance for your support in the effort to inform the public.

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Connie Brayboy, Editor One Year In NC \$20 Out of State \$25 Second Class Postage Paid at Pembroke, NC

Reader says LRDA should focus on educating others about Lumbee

Dear Editor:
 I hope that you have full intentions of publishing the following argument that I have with Lumbee Regional Development Association (LRDA). I am full blooded Lumbee Indian. I was not born in Pembroke, NC and all my life I have been exposed to the threat of discrimination by only one main group of people, my own. Because I don't have the Old English tongue that most Lumbees carry, I am labeled as an outsider and a fake.

Through my college years at Pembroke State University, now UNCP, I gained knowledge that lead me out into the world, as well as respect within the Lumbee community. But I still faced the burden of being ridiculed and degraded for not being from Pembroke, NC, but instead my hometown of Charlotte, NC.

The other day I called LRDA and asked for a listing of pow-wows that were beginning in the area. I was given to a particular member of LRDA who by the sound

of my voice decided not to send me information on pow-wows since, and I precisely quote "sounded like a white girl." Once this person got my name and knew who I was, she then decided to send me the information requested. But she also continued to degrade a society of people (Anglo Americans) because of their skin color, claiming that they didn't need to be a part of our culture, our celebration, the pow-wows of North Carolina.

I told this person that the whole purpose of pow-wows was to educate the public that Native Americans still exist in the twentieth century. But how can we do that if we keep our Lost Colony lost? I am disgusted by the way that our people cry for federal recognition, explode when people have never heard of Lumbee Native Americans, but at the same time are quiet in showing the world who and what we are.

I have dedicated my entire life around Native Americans Youth Organizations, Native American

Student Organizations, Pow-Wows, and currently I go around to South Carolina Regional Schools to relay the message that Native Americans exist in the twentieth century. But still I am criticized and ridiculed by one group of people, my own. This ignorance has to cease. The time has come to throw down our weapons and to be the people that we should be. Our stereotype is people of the earth, who love each other, despite the color of one's skin, despite the language spoken by others, and despite the locality of one of our own. I am so very proud to be Lumbee Indian, but I am not proud of some of my people and the ones I am focusing on are the very ones who need to promote and extend our culture to society. LRDA, your focus needs to be on educating the world that we exist, not keeping the world from knowing who we are.

Sincerely,
 Dana Lowry
 Greenville, SC

Along the Robeson Trail

by Dr. Stanley Knick
 Director, UNCP Native American Resource Center

(Author's Note: After this timely announcement, we will return to discussion of the prehistoric context of the Lumbee.)

Many times we have been asked here in the Native American Resource Center for recorded oral histories from Lumbee elders. Although our budget has not allowed us to pursue the collection of Lumbee oral history as much as we would like to, we realize that such recordings can be extremely valuable in reconstructing Lumbee history and in understanding Lumbee culture.

Now a group of such recordings has become available to us, and because of a generous donation to The Center we are in turn able to make them available to the general public and to researchers interested in study of the Lumbee. These recordings were made in the Lumbee community during the period 1969 to 1971, and consist of interviews conducted by Professor Adolph Dial. The recordings were on reel-to-reel tape, and have recently been transposed to CD format by the staff of the North Carolina Language and Life Project (led by Dr. Walt Wolfram of NC State University). Dr. Wolfram graciously donated a copy of these thirty-six CDs to us. Because they are in CD format, they will last a much longer time than taped recordings would. But we had

no way to play them.

When Mrs. Mary Doris Dial-Caple, daughter of the late Professor Dial, learned of our predicament she came to the rescue. She has donated a CD player to The Center, so that these significant recordings can be shared with the public. Her gift of this equipment has unlocked a door to the past — a door which opens the way to a better understanding of Lumbee history and culture. Through this gift, she is continuing in the best tradition of her father, who was well known for his generous support of this institution.

The recordings cover a great many topics, including a few excerpts relating to other tribes in North Carolina and even one about Creek Indians in Oklahoma. Following is a list of the persons interviewed by Dr. Dial in this series: Colon Brooks; Rosetta Brooks; John W. Dial; Mrs. D. E. Lowry; Willoughby Jones; Pearson Locklear; James E. Chavis; Mrs. N. H. Dial; Mr. and Mrs. Archie Locke; Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Chavis; Mr. and Mrs. James K. Brayboy; Claude Lowry; D. F. Lowry; Daniel Edwin Lowry; Lloyd Lowry; Nancy Lowry Revels; Fuller Locklear; Dannie Chavis; James Chavis; Mabe Sampson; John Godwin; Clifton Oxendine; C. E. Locklear; Early Bullard; Gaston Locklear; Bessie and

George Ransom; Mary Lowry Jacobs; Elisha Dial; Betty Rogers; W. R. Richardson; Charlie Oxendine; Herbert Locklear; Randolph Smith; Rosa Hunt; Elizabeth Locklear; Mr. and Mrs. Albert Bell; Dophus Brewington; Danford Dial; Robert Mangum; Mrs. Willie Locklear; Henry Long Cree (Oklahoma); Nancy Chavis Locklear; Mrs. Charlie H. Moore; Rose Sampson; Carter; James Allen Locklear; James Moore; Miles S. Jones; Henry Moore; Annie L. Lowery; John L. Carter; Rand Bullard; Charlie W. Oxendine; Mrs. Willie C. Chavis; Danny Lowry; and Dawley Maynor. There are also passages of discussion by Dr. Dial.

These recordings are of interest from several perspectives. As Dr. Wolfram has shown, they have linguistic importance. They also have historical and cultural significance. They also allow descendants and other family members of the interviewees an opportunity to hear a recording of their relative.

Anyone who wishes to hear one or more of these recordings should call us here at The Center (521-6282) to arrange an appointment. For more information, visit the Native American Resource Center in historic Old Main Building, on the campus of The University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

Some Thoughts From Derek Lowry: Watching Other People

Dear Editor,
 Well, it's me again, with just a few things to think about for all of those who are willing to read this. It sure was a summer to remember. In some ways it was mild, and in others it was hot. We went through periods of hardly any rain, but in the end we got just enough to get by. Funny how that works out. If we have a good understanding of who is really in charge, we know it works out the way. He wants it. After all how many times have we said not our will, but "Thy be done on Earth as it is in heaven?"

I like to watch people. It's a hobby of mine. Do you ever notice people when they don't get their way? It is never a pretty sight for those who think every thing should be the way that they think. They forget who is really in charge. I think that it is time that we ask ourselves: Who is the captain of our ship?

I'll say it again I'm not perfect just forgiven. And it seems sometimes I have to ask for alot of forgiveness. Have you ever noticed those people who are perfect? They act like they have never done wrong in their lives and they sure can point out the wrongs you've done. Then again, if those are quick to point would stop for a second they would see they might need to ask forgiveness also. If you think about it the world needs to see a sermon, not just hear one.

I always smile inside at those who think their right all the time.

It must be a hard life for them. Because just when you think you've got it all figured out life has a way of handing you a curve, or worse, a set back. Once again it's just a reminder, who is really right all the time? Now if you're into action type people, watch those who are always exercising. You can tell who they are because they are jumping to conclusions. They seem to be rushing into this cause or jumping into this fight, before they know what it's all about. I wonder if they have ever heard "If you're quick to fight your own battles the Almighty steps aside and allows you to taste defeat". Maybe they also need to hear "Not every war cry is a reason to rush into battle." It might be nothing more than a need to draw your attention to something.

Then there are people who say one thing and do another. Maybe they have never heard "To an Indian his word is like a rock, it never changes." I must confess I have had a hard time dealing with these kind of people. Most of the time I like alot of space between them and me. It's simple if your yes can't be yes all the time, then don't say anything at all. No one makes friends by giving their word and doing something else. It just goes to show, you can have faith in the Creator but man will let you down.

But deep inside us all is the desire to be a better person. As a matter of fact, I wish I had a sign

that reads: Warning, perfect person under construction". I've learned a great deal from the School of Hard Knocks. As a matter of fact, I've just about finished a PH.D (Piled High and Deep). Well to be perfectly honest with you, there are days when I feel like I'll never learn of worse. I've only half learned a lesson. Take for instance forgiving and forgetting. I can forgive but I don't always forget what they have done to me.

Well anyway the next time you get fed up with someone, make the decision to change because you are the only one you can change.

If you can't get over it, at least get around it. That's what most of us simple minded people do. After all, you know they say, "Other people's people are a mess and you know we can't too. Maybe what we need to do is not to expect too much out of some people, and others we just need to simply leave alone because it takes all kinds to make this world.

So instead of getting upset with someone, look first at yourself. Maybe the problem is yours and not theirs. You can call me the Bible Thumper or whatever, sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me. It's getting up in the morning that really does that.

Hope I've given you some things to think about. And, by the way, they are only my opinions. I'm sure you have yours.

In the True Way,
 Derek Lowry

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