

# The Sunday School Lesson

John Brayboy, Salem  
Missionary Baptist Church

**Make the Hard Choices**  
Ezra 9:1-3; 10:9-14

- I. Painful Discovery (Ezra 9:1-3)
- II. Necessary Correction (Ezra 10:9-12)
- III. Compassionate Obedience (Ezra 10:12-14)

**I. Painful Discovery (Ezra 9:1-3)**  
Ezra found out from the princes of Israel that the people had not separated themselves from the foreigners around them. Surprisingly, it was the leaders who were the participants in this sin. The very people who were supposed to be setting the example were the very ones who were breaking the commandments of God. Leaders have a grave responsibility of leading by example. When they fail to set forth a good example, those who are supposed to be following are apt to follow their example.

The leaders had intermarried with those in the heathen nations around them. The concern of the lay people when they brought it to Ezra's attention was that the line of Israel would no longer be pure. God wanted Israel to be a separate people so that they would be a light to the world. Inter-marrying with the heathen would take away from that distinction. There was concern also because they had just come out of exile for being disobedient to God. Those lay people did not want to see God's anger kindled against them again.

When the leaders walk contrary to the will of God, not only do they suffer but the whole group will suffer. Ezra was astonished at what he heard that the leaders were doing. He was so amazed that he pulled his hair out of his head and beard, and tore his garment.

**II. Necessary Correction (Ezra 10:9-11)**

After Ezra had prayed he called

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for all the exiles to meet in three days to deal with the matter of marrying foreigners. They came together in the rain, trembling from the rain and the matter before them. Ezra addressed the crowd and made it clear to them about their sins of taking spouses from foreign lands. This practice had caused many of them to follow after the idols of their spouses.

Because they had done contrary to God's commandment, Ezra told them that they must confess and correct the situation. His instruction was that they must separate themselves from the people and their strange wives. God's people cannot compromise with the world and maintaining their spiritual value with God. I heard a preacher say one time that a praying knee and a dancing foot did not grow on the same leg. God's people cannot play with the world and stay clean with God.

**III. Compassionate Obedience (Ezra 10:12-14)**

The congregation agreed to what Ezra instructed them that they must do. It was raining and there were so many people involved that the people requested that the matter be handled by appointment. Those who had taken strange wives were told to stand. The elders from each city were to see about those in their city. In most cases the elder member had witnessed these marriages and knew the particular of them.

It was not a simple matter in Israel to divorce someone. There were financial considerations as well as responsibility of children. While this was a difficult situation for those involved, it was something that had to be done to avoid the wrath of God. When people are faced with divorce there is in most cases difficulty, but those involved need to be fair. Also, if it happens to someone we know, we do not need to alienate ourselves from them; but for the grace of God it could be us.

Being faithful to God can call for tough decisions, but it will be worth it in the end of life's way.  
God bless you all until next week.  
Pray for us.

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## Obituary

**Mr. Miles (M.H.) Hammond - Lumberton, NC** - Mr. Miles Hartman (M.H.) Hammond, age 93, of 631 Hammonds Road, Lumberton, NC died Monday evening, November 3, 1997 at Southeastern Regional Medical Center.

Mr. Hammond was born in Robeson County on December 7, 1903 to the late Will H. Hammond and Annie Godwin Hammond of the Saddletree community, and was a lifetime farmer.

Funeral services were held Wednesday at 3 P.M. in Biggs Chapel with the Rev. Earney Hammonds and Rev. Jerry R. McNeill officiating. Interment followed in the Hammond Family Cemetery.

Surviving are wife, Eunice Hammond of the home; two daughters, Doris Hall and Earnestine Locklear both of Lumberton; two sons, Douglas Hammond of Lumberton, NC and Miles Judson Hammond of Ocean Isle Beach, NC; three brothers, James Hammond of Red Springs, NC; Ball French Hammond of Lumberton, NC; and Carl Hammond of Florida's six sisters, Fannie Blanks of Elizabethtown, NC; Jessie Bell Smith, Vernie Chavis, Girlie Locklear and Grace Hammond Stewart, all of Lumberton, NC; Julie Blankenship of Georgia; 11 grandchildren; 10 great grandchildren and 6 great-great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by a son, Harry Donald Hammond.

Loving-kindness is the better part of goodness.  
—W. Somerset Maugham

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# Along the Robeson Trail

by Dr. Stanley Knick

Director, UNCP Native American Resource Center

(Author's Note: The extended series on the context of the Lumbee will continue after this timely announcement.)

Those great *Recollections* photographs are back! The Native American Resource Center is pleased to announce the return of the popular photographic exhibit entitled *Recollections: Lumbee Heritage*. This exhibit is the result of a community-based cooperative project involving the Native American Resource Center, the Mint Museum in Charlotte, the North Carolina Indian Cultural Center and members of the Lumbee community. It was originally shown at the Mint Museum, and then began its tour of other sites around the state with a grand opening here in The Center in 1995. Now the circle is completed with this reprise showing here in the land of the Lumbee.

The exhibit features two sets of photographs. First is a collection of images from earlier days in the lives of the Lumbee. These particular photographs were copied from the family collections of numerous people in the Lumbee community. They reflect a wide range of topics and activities selected under the following four themes: Lumbee Relationship to

Balance; Lumbee Relationship to Each Other, to Community and to Family; Lumbee Relationship to the Land; and Lumbee Relationship to Nation.

While this first set of photographs was being collected, oral histories about the people and places in the pictures were documented by Lumbee writer Barbara Braveboy-Locklear. In most cases this enabled us to provide a more full cultural and historical context to the photographs. These oral histories, when they are available, help the viewer to understand not only what is going on in the picture but also what the picture symbolizes. Beyond the descriptive labels based on oral histories which accompany each photograph, visitors may pick up a copy of the printed oral history of the entire collection written by Ms. Braveboy-Locklear. This collective oral history statement is organized into four sections corresponding to the four themes of the exhibit (see above).

The second, and smaller, set of photographs in *Recollections* consists of modern pictures taken by Lumbee photographer David Oxendine and Mint Museum photographer Robert West. These images serve several purposes. They show contemporary

Lumbee people, including several elders, and feature the continuity between Lumbee past and Lumbee present. This continuity allows the viewer to see that past and present seem literally to flow into each other — a vision which reveals that while some things have changed among the Lumbee, many other things have remained much the same. These modern photographs also capture parts of the process of collecting old pictures and oral histories.

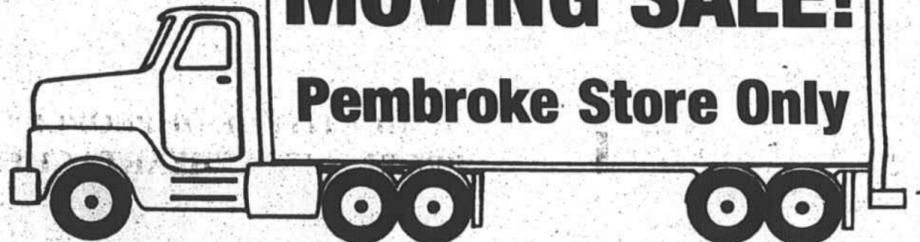
But the intention of *Recollections* is not to encapsulate all there is to know about the Lumbee, nor to show a picture of every deserving Lumbee. No exhibit could do that. Hundreds of photographs had to be left out in the selection process, in order to make the exhibit manageable and transportable. What the exhibit does intend to do, and what it ably accomplishes, is to provide a glimpse into Lumbee heritage through images and words.

*Recollections: Lumbee Heritage* will be on display in The Center through mid-January 1998. 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.

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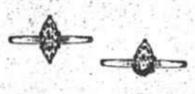
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