



# Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina

## Education



Much of the initial impetus for the Lumbees to seek state and federal recognition was to secure an education for their children.

Before being recognized in 1885, the Indians were given two options: attend school with Black children or do not attend school at all. The inherent necessity to maintain their Indian identity inspired some of the Indians to build and fund their own subscription schools. Some Indian children received no formal education at all.<sup>1</sup> Aldoph Dial, a Lumbee historian and professor, refers to this time as the “Decade of Despair”.<sup>2</sup> Even so, all was not lost; the People focused on education



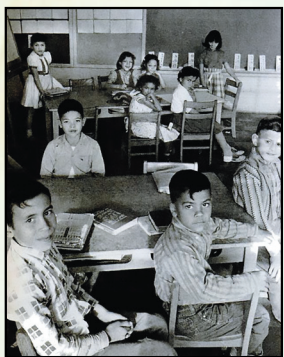
*The Children by Samuel Bird*

with fervor, and achieved a remarkable success.



Indian Normal School Students with Principal ~ Circa 1916

Hamilton McMillan’s 1885 legislation garnered a separate school system for the Indians. The People quickly recognized a need for educated Indian teachers for their Indian schools. In 1887, McMillan sponsored legislation for an Indian Normal School. The bill passed and \$500.00 was appropriated to fund teacher’s salaries.<sup>3</sup> It was left up to the Indians to secure building funds and land for the school. So they did. In a wooden two-story structure built by the Indians with materials they provided themselves, the Croatan Normal School opened in the fall of 1887.<sup>4</sup>



Lumbee students in primary school in 1958 - LIFE magazine<sup>6</sup>

**“I DO NOT THINK THAT THERE IS ANY CLASS OF OUR PEOPLE IN RECENT YEARS THAT HAVE SHOWN MORE INTEREST IN TRYING TO EDUCATE THEIR CHILDREN THAN THEY HAVE.”**

~ US Senator Furnifold Simmons

referring to the Lumbee ancestors in 1913 during a public hearing of the House Committee on Indian Affairs<sup>7</sup>

The school’s name changed along with the people up until 1941, when it began offering four-year degrees, and became known as Pembroke College for Indians. Between 1939 and 1953, it was the only state-supported four-year college for Indians in the entire nation.<sup>5</sup> Today, the school is part of the UNC campus system and is known as the University of North Carolina at Pembroke (UNCP). It recently celebrated its 125th



Left: Indian students attend a summer camp at UNCP through a grant program that builds upon the ongoing partnership between the Lumbee people and the University.

anniversary. The University continues to be an integral component of the Lumbee community and Education remains a core value of the Lumbee people.



Prospect High School 1925 Basketball Team



Madison Davenport  
Miss UNCP 2016  
Miss Lumbee 2017