Over and again, the Lumbee have demonstrated purposeful determination to move forward despite daunting challenges and barriers.

An indistinguishable strength of will enabled the People to survive years of war, disease and oppression. Likewise, the indomitable spirit that propelled Henry Berry Lowrie to fight for justice is the same spirit that mobilized the People to seek an education for their children – on their own terms. Lumbee people determine their own course and they place a high value on the freedom to do so. They have engaged in self-determination and self-governance throughout their history.

The Lumbee are a deeply spiritual people and ‘church’ has a central place in many of their lives for not only spiritual reasons, but for social and cultural reasons as well. During the early 1800’s, ancestors of the Lumbee moved from brush arbors and riverbanks where they congregated for religious activities into churches and buildings that they established for themselves. The bonds of kinship and place that are so integral to the identity of the Lumbee found a fertile soil in which to manifest and grow within the environs of the Indian churches.

Societies known as Red Men's Lodges functioned as a political and social structure in the Indian communities around the early 1900’s. In addition to conducting ceremonies and rituals, these societies maintained order in the community, policing morality and conduct. The Red Men's Lodges were composed of leaders from within the respective communities.

In 1968, the Lumbee Regional Development Association, Inc. was established to serve the Lumbee people through various programs and services. It functioned as the tribal governing structure until 2000 when enrolled Lumbees came together to create a tribal constitution. This constitution was adopted in 2001 and thus secured the Lumbee Tribal government that exists today. Today, 21 members sit on the Tribal Council representing 14 districts in the tribal territory. The Tribal Chairman heads the government and represents the People.