



Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina

The Cultural Center



The lake and garden at the Cultural Center. The Lumbee have always had a reciprocal relationship with Tobacco, shown here. It has historically been an important crop, economically and agriculturally, and is an integral element of ceremony and prayer.

The Resettlement Project established under the Indian Reorganization Act created Pembroke Farms as a way to help the Lumbee ancestors escape the sharecropping system and become self-sufficient. The Red Banks Mutual Association, a cooperative farm formed by about 15 families from Pembroke Farms became the “longest running New Deal cooperative in America.”¹

While the resettlement project suffered some setbacks, it had begun to run smoothly by 1943, when the government decided to sell the project units at a loss.² Fortunately, the Lumbee ancestors were able to purchase some of the land that included their community building. This land became a recreation center

in the early 1960’s.³ It became a place for the Indians to gather during segregation for outdoor activities including swimming and ball games.

The State of North Carolina eventually purchased the Recreation Center and renamed it the North Carolina Indian Cultural Center. It was designed as a meeting place for all Indians of North Carolina. In addition to the lake, it included space for cultural gatherings and celebrations, an 18-hole riverside golf course and an open-air pool facility. It also became the home of *Strike at the*

Wind!, a living-history outdoor drama chronicling the Lowrie War and featuring Henry Berry Lowrie, a Lumbee hero.



Raymond ‘Spotted Turtle’ Clark, a founding elder of the Sacred Fire.⁴

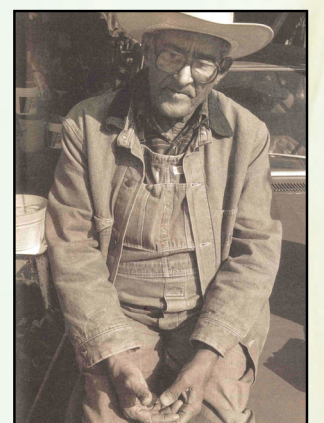
The Cultural Center holds a special place in the hearts of many Lumbee. In the early 1990’s, individual Indian families and elders such as Raymond ‘Spotted Turtle’ Clark and Pauline Bullard Locklear came together at the Cultural Center to make a central fire. The culture and identity that had so long been suppressed reemerged and brought healing to the People.

Ceremonies and songs that had still been secretly practiced and sung in the shadows, came back into the light. The People brought the ashes from their home fires, family fires and community fires together to the central fire – bringing together their ways of being in a good way. The ashes of the fires came from all over, just as the People did long ago.

In 2014, the Lumbee Tribe purchased the Cultural Center back from the State of North Carolina as the state made plans to sell the land. It continues to be a Place for the People.



Above: Various photographs from the Elmer W. Hunt Collection depict Lumbee people enjoying the Cultural Center - swimming, boating, fishing, and golfing. The bottom photo shows a scene from the drama, *Strike at the Wind!*



Vernon Cooper
Renowned Healer⁵

Earl ‘Manyskins’ Carter
Firekeeper



The annual *Dance of the Spring Moon* Lumbee Powwow returned to its home at the Cultural Center in 2016 after being away for a decade.



Sherry Carter
Senior Ms. Lumbee 2017

