

(4) Proposed Finding Documents

- March 28, 1984



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20245

MAR 28 1984

Tribal Government Services-FA

MEMORANDUM

To: Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

From: Deputy Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs (Operations)

Subject: Recommendation and Summary of Evidence for Proposed Finding Against Federal Acknowledgment of the United Lumbee Nation of North Carolina and America, Inc. Pursuant to 25 CFR 83.

Recommendation

We recommend that the United Lumbee Nation of North Carolina and America, Inc. (hereinafter "ULN") not be acknowledged as an Indian tribe entitled to a government-to-government relationship with the United States. We further recommend that a letter of the proposed determination be forwarded to the ULN and other interested parties, and that a notice of the proposed finding that they do not exist as an Indian tribe be published in the Federal Register.

General Conclusions

The ULN is a recently formed organization which did not exist prior to 1976. The organization was conceived, incorporated and promoted by one individual for personal interests and did not evolve from a tribal entity which existed on a substantially continuous basis from historical times until the present. The ULN has no relation to the Lumbees of the Robeson County area in North Carolina (hereinafter "Lumbees") historically socially, genealogically, politically or organizationally. The use of the name "Lumbee" by the ULN appears to be an effort on the part of the founder, Malcolm L. Webber (aka Chief Thunderbird), to establish credibility in the minds of recruits and outside organizations.

The ULN has no characteristics of an Indian tribe which has maintained tribal relations from historical times. No evidence was submitted by the petitioner or found by the staff which indicates the organization ever had a political existence prior to or after its founding in 1976.

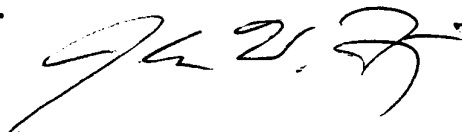
The ULN has undergone several changes in character since its founding. It was first a one-man idea, a small organization, and currently is an apparently substantial, widely dispersed, loose-knit organization, possibly nation-wide in scope. Webber organized and claimed leadership of several similar organizations including the Etowah Cherokee and Hightower Indian Tribes of Georgia in 1975; in 1976 the leadership of the Cherokee Nation-Iroquois, Georgia; in 1977 the ULN of Virginia; and in 1979, the ULN of California. He subsequently formed the Kaweah Indian Nation in 1980. Presently the ULN has the character of a widespread Indian-interest organization composed of individuals claiming ancestry from a diverse range of recognized and unrecognized tribal backgrounds. The ULN also appears to have a substantial number of non-Indians as members.

The present leadership and driving force behind the ULN group today are two individuals, Mrs. Eva Reed and Mrs. Ruby Boyer. Both women were recruits of Malcolm Webber, they wrested control of the organization from Webber with the help of the now-deceased spouse of Mrs. Reed. These women continue to operate the organization on a more discreet scale. As a result of the conflict over the control of the ULN Mr. Webber, a non-Indian, went on to form the Kaweah Indian Nation in 1980. The Acknowledgment staff could not verify that Mr. Webber has any Indian ancestry; his birth certificate indicates that he was born in Ellsworth, Maine (not Oklahoma, as he has publicly stated elsewhere) of non-Indian parents. Nothing in Mr. Webber's background discovered by the Acknowledgment staff indicates Indian ancestry in his family.

The present membership of the ULN is not composed of individuals of actual Lumbee descent. It is composed primarily of individuals who are recruited to join, who pay a modest membership fee, and who receive a wallet identification card in return. Some ULN members are also members of a wide variety of recognized tribes who are seeking Indian-interest organizations away from home reservations; some are members or believe themselves to be members of unrecognized Indian groups (other than Lumbee); numbers of members are non-Indian spouses and children of members who claim Indian ancestry; still others are non-Indians directly recruited by Mr. Webber in the early period of the organization and apparently inadvertently picked up by the later leadership when the group split in 1980. Most members cannot or have not established Indian ancestry through customary, accepted genealogical methods. Mrs. Reed stated that "We try to verify Indian ancestry as best we can."¹ Documentation is not required, however, and applications are accepted with presentation of a completed family tree chart. Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Boyer have files with individual folders for members, but few contain documentation.

According to the current leadership of the ULN, its membership is composed of approximately 2000 members scattered widely throughout 43 states and the District of Columbia. The "Nation" (national organization) is a loose-knit organization of 18 "tribes" which have members in one or more state. The stated purpose of the ULN is "to enrich the cultural heritage of our people and help maintain their health and welfare, and to uphold the general rights of the Lumbee Indians. . . to be recognized as American Indians and to contribute a charitable service to our members." Local groups vary in character and in intensity of activity. Members of at least one of these "tribes" claim to have sent contributions to the "national headquarters" to help defray the cost of printing and mailing of the newsletter and for "other activities."²

There are no communities of ULN members, although there are non-Indian communities that have several ULN members residing intermixed with the general population. Membership is gained by application and payment of a ten-dollar "administrative fee." While it appears to be a relatively large organization numerically, it has no characteristics of an Indian tribe with the possible exception that some of its members may be Indian or part Indian. Few members, if any, appear to be Lumbees from Robeson County North Carolina or descendants of actual Lumbees. The ULN members generally claim membership from a wide variety of tribes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. V. F." with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Evaluation of the ULN Petition
by the criteria in Part 83 of Title 25
of the Code of Federal Regulations**

The following is a discussion of the ULN in light of the criteria in Section 83.7 of the Acknowledgment regulations. It is based on research by the Federal Acknowledgment staff, submissions by the petitioner, and interviews with members and the principal leadership.

83.7 (a) A statement of facts establishing that the petitioner has been identified from historical times until the present on a substantially continuous basis, as "American Indian," or "aboriginal." A petitioner shall not fail to satisfy any criteria herein merely because of fluctuations of activity during various years.

There is no evidence that the group was identified on a prolonged and repeated basis as having been an American Indian entity by recognized Indian tribes, governmental agencies, scholars or other sources. The lack of evidence is not caused by fluctuations in the group's activity. The petitioner presented no evidence, nor could any be found by the staff, that any predecessor groups to the ULN existed prior to late 1976.

The ULN is neither a part of, nor is it an outgrowth of or in any way derived from, the Lumbees in Robeson County, North Carolina. No evidence was presented and none could be found that any relationship, historical or contemporary, existed between the ULN and the Lumbees, or any other North American Indian tribe.

The organization which represents the preponderance of the Lumbees, the Lumbee Regional Development Association, Inc., (LRDA) formally opposes acknowledgment of the ULN. In a letter to the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Kenneth R. Maynor, Executive Director of the LRDA, wrote:

Although the Lumbee population is widespread and very large, none of our people claim ties or give support to the United Lumbee Nation, the fraudulent organization directed by "Chief Thunderbird" Webber. Our people who became involved in the United Lumbee Nation did so to learn about his fraudulent schemes and to disclose them to the public. When the Indians soon learned of his criminal activities, they publicly denounced the United Lumbee Nation. Webber and his accomplices then moved to Exeter, California, where they resumed their fraudulent operations.⁹

Although a great deal has been written about the Lumbee Indians, no evidence was found to indicate any scholars such as Adolph Dial, Robert Thomas, Carl Seltzer or Karen Blu have ever studied or even mentioned the ULN. The ULN's own account of its history dates the formation of the group in November 1976: "Chief Thunderbird Webber and his wife, Princess Sunflower Morningstar Webber, resigned as Chief of the Georgia Cherokees to help the Lumbee people as their Grand Council Head Chief to form the Lumbees into a nation."¹⁰

Because of the group's failure to show that an antecedent group existed which could be identified as Indian we conclude the ULN fails to meet the criteria in 83.7(a)

83.7(b) Evidence that a substantial portion of the petitioning group inhabits a specific area or lives in a community viewed as American Indian and

distinct from other populations in the area, and that its members are descendants of an Indian tribe which historically inhabited a specific area.

Insofar as can be determined, there are no ULN communities and no group of members inhabiting a specific area or living in a community viewed as American Indian. There is no evidence that the ULN has any connection with the Lumbees in North Carolina in the past or the present, though there may be a few Lumbee individuals who have joined the organization. The petitioner submitted no evidence that its members descended from an Indian tribe which historically inhabited a specific area.

In its Tribal Directory, the ULN lists 19 "tribes" or local units which purportedly operate in the local areas around the country.¹² These are as follows (blank spaces appear as is in the directory):

TRIBE

MEHERRIN

Chieftainess: Princess Eva Silver Star Reed

Vice-Chief:

Secretary-Treasurer: Ruby Momma Quail Boyer

Tribal Area: North of Kern County, California to the Oregon border.
The States of Nevada and Utah.

THUNDER STAR

Chief:

Vice-Chief: Delbert Winter Hawk Teis

Secretary-Treasurer: Bette Morning Dawn Valdrow

Tribal Area: Kern County, California south to Mexico border.

MAYACA

Chief: Elmer War Eagle Beck

Vice Chief:

Secretary-Treasurer: Lynda Kiska Varney

Tribal Area: Arizona and New Mexico

MUSWAA

Chief:

Vice-Chief:

Secretary-Treasurer:

Tribal Area: Farmersville, Tulare County, California
For information contact Councilman Gary L. Bell

COOSA

Chief: Samuel Strong Blood Wolhai

Vice-Chief:

Secretary-Treasurer:

Tribal Area: Oregon, Washington, and Idaho

ACCOMAC

Chieftainess: Julia Ratliff

Vice-Chieftainess: Cora Kasey

Secretary-Treasurer:

Tribal Area: District of Columbia, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey
and Delaware.

TRIBAL AREAS WITHOUT LOCAL CONTACT

WINYAW

Tribal Area: Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana

TEJAS

Tribal Area: Texas and Oklahoma

KEOWEE

Tribal Area: Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa

KROATAN

Tribal Area: North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin

ACCOHANOCK

Tribal Area: Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi

WEANOC

Tribal Area: Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana

CHICKAMAUGA

Tribal Area: Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee

UPPER CHICKAMAUGA

Tribal Area: Michigan

UPPER ACCOMAC

Tribal Area: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, Rhode Island, New York, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania

LOWER ACCOMAC

Tribal Area: Georgia and Alabama

SAPONI

Tribal Area: North Carolina and South Carolina

NOTTOWAY

Tribal Area: Florida

WESTERN ACCOMAC

Tribal Area: Oregon

Membership in these local groups appears to have no common characteristic except receipt of the ULN newsletter. Individuals and families who belong to these local groups appear to be randomly scattered throughout the general population in a large number of states. No instance was presented, and none could be found, in which the ULN members could be distinguished as an Indian group from other citizens in a particular area. There was no indication of a common social, cultural or genealogical background. There appears to be no general knowledge of a common history before 1976. Individuals interviewed claimed a wide variety of tribal backgrounds including Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Hopi, Navajo, and a variety of California tribes. Virtually every member interviewed claimed he knew of non-Indian members, even though the constitution required Indian ancestry. Mr. Webber, the group's founder, claimed to be an Indian of Standing Rock and Oglala Sioux, Cherokee, Comanche, Navajo and Apache ancestry,

born in Webber's Falls, Oklahoma (see Appendix A). He was actually born of Caucasian parents in Ellsworth, Maine.¹³ Local groups appear to have the character of Indian-interest urban groups which pursue a wide range of activities determined by local interest.

The ULN has not demonstrated that a substantial portion of the group lives in a specific area or community viewed as American Indian; the members are not distinct from other populations in the areas in which they live, and its members are not descendants of an Indian tribe which inhabited a specific area. We therefore conclude that the ULN does not meet the criteria set forth in 25 CFR 83.7 (b).

83.7(c) A statement of facts which establishes that the petitioner has maintained tribal political influence or other authority over its members as an autonomous entity throughout history until the present.

A constitution for the ULN was originally drafted in mid-year 1977. A number of minor revisions have followed as locations, group members, and circumstances have changed from 1977 until the present. Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Boyer drafted the last major revision of the constitution in 1981 after the split with Webber.¹⁴

There is no evidence that the group maintains political influence over its members. Mrs. Reed acknowledges the fact that the primary function of the "national office" is to publish the newsletter; to accept donations, gifts and grants; to raise funds from sales of books, papers and other "enterprises in line with the nation's business"; and to collect admissions and donations to social events. The "national office" also keeps files on members and a mailing list for the newsletter.¹⁵ The purposes of the organization, as written in Article 7, Section A of the most recent constitution, are to enrich the group's cultural heritage, uphold the general rights of the Lumbee Indians, and to be recognized as true Native American Indians."

The ULN did not provide a statement of fact or evidence to suggest that the group maintained tribal political influence or other authority over its members at present or at any time during its existence since 1976. The organization was founded in 1976 and did not evolve from an earlier tribal political body. The present leadership does not control or affect the operation of local units, and in fact candidly stated that activities of the local "tribes" are determined by the local group.¹⁶ In a letter to the Branch of Federal Acknowledgment Ms. Reed notes that "Each tribe [local organization] has a tribal by-laws to govern their tribe." Because of this and the fact that a large portion of the Nation's executive officers are in the Meherrin Lumbee tribe of California and Nevada, a local organization in California, the National Office or Main Office was moved to Exeter, California in May 1979 and subsequently to Fall River Mills California in 1980.

We conclude that the ULN fails to meet the criteria in 83.7(c) because the group has not existed throughout history until the present; has never existed as an autonomous entity; and presently does not exercise political authority over its members.

83.7(d) A copy of the group's present governing document, or in the absence of a written document, a statement describing in full the membership criteria and the procedures through which the group currently governs its affairs and its members.

The ULN leadership has submitted four separate governing documents. The first was submitted on June 10, 1978, when Mr. Webber resided in Richmond. Article VI of this document dealt with membership and simply said "Adopted into the nation a person may

keep his birth nation identity. No one with black African blood to be member of this nation." On January 22, 1979, this same document was resubmitted with a line drawn through the sentence "no one with black African blood to be a member of this nation" and a handwritten note added at the bottom of the ULN governing document stating "This is only part of our laws." A third and slightly longer version of the ULN governing document was submitted to the Bureau in September, 1979. The third version, dated July 12, 1979, provided for a \$10 "roll fee" to "help with printing." As will be seen in Sections 1 and 2 of the revised Article VI quoted below, membership was, for the first time, to be restricted to persons known as Lumbee:

- Section 1. Adopted into nation person must be known as Lumbee. Those with negro blood must prove thier [sic] Indian blood.
- Section 2. Citizenship of nation; any tribal member can join any group. But Lumbee people are allowed to carry roll card of our nation only.

The three preceding governing documents were submitted while the group was under the leadership of Thunderbird Webber. Following a split in the ULN organization in 1980, Mr. Webber went on to form the Kaweah Indian Nation.

The ULN organization continued under the leadership of Mrs. Reed, who submitted the fourth "clarified and amended constitution and By-Laws" of the ULN in November, 1981. This document describes how the group governs its members and sets forth the following requirements for membership in the ULN:

Article 5, Membership:

- Section A. All persons must document their Indian blood line. To be excepted into the United Lumbee Nation of NC and America. Of not less than 1/16 Indian blood.
- Section B. Adoption membership is by being married to a Indian member, or by majority vote of the Grand Council, on recommendation of a local Tribal Chief.
- Section C. Citizenship of Nation: All members must acknowledge, they are members of the United Lumbee Nation of NC and America.
- Section D. There is a one time only roll donation fee, per application, to help pay printing and postage costs.
- Section E. There are no restrictions on members belonging to a club, or fraternitys. The United Lumbee Nation is a Sovereign Nation not a Club.

(Note: The above article concerning membership is quoted exactly as it appears in the document, verbatim, including typographical and spelling errors.)

We conclude the ULN has met the criterion in 83.7(d) through the submission of its current as well former governing documents.

83.7(e) A list of all known current members of the group and a copy of each available former list of members based on the tribe's own defined

criteria. The membership must consist of individuals who have established, using evidence acceptable to the Secretary, descendency from a tribe which existed historically or from historical tribes which combined and functioned as a single autonomous entity.

Information concerning the membership of the ULN was scarce. No membership roll/list was provided for the group covering the period when the ULN was under the leadership of Mr. Webber. The only roll available for review was one provided by Mrs. Reed on February 25, 1980, which contained the names of 1,321 members. The group presently claims over 2,000 members showing an increase of at least 679 members who have joined since the roll was submitted.

The 1980 roll was organized regionally into 19 different Lumbee "tribes" based essentially on member addresses. (For a list of the 19 "tribes," refer to page 2.) Information furnished for each member included his name and ULN roll number. Addresses were provided for roughly half of the names listed. However, except for a few notations indicating individuals to be "mother" or "children of roll number," the roll contained no other information of a personal nature. Further, no ancestry charts of any kind were provided and the acknowledgment staff was notified that release of such information would be against ULN policy.

Mrs. Reed, chairman of the group, states that the "[ULN] of North Carolina and America is a fragment of the Lumbee's of North Carolina [who were] recognized by Congress in 1956 as Indian people." She goes on to say "We are aware that the Lumbee Regional [Development] Association (LRDA) of Pembroke, NC does not agree with us." (Reed to Shapard, September 15, 1982) Mr. Kenneth Maynor of the LRDA maintains that LRDA knows of no Lumbees who have remained members of the ULN after learning the true nature of the organization. ¹⁹

Based on interviews with a number of the members and on ULN literature, Acknowledgment researchers anticipate that less than 4 percent of the group's members are likely to be of Lumbee ancestry. Mrs. Reed presently believes the percentage of Lumbee ancestry in the group to be somewhat higher. The Indian ancestry, if indeed any, of ULN members could not be verified, however, due the total lack of personal information about individual members.

Leaders state that although all ULN members are required to possess 1/16 Indian blood, they do enroll some non-Indian spouses to avoid breaking up families. Applicants for membership must complete a form giving their name, address and date of birth, and the names and dates of birth for their spouses and any children living at home. The membership application form asks only two questions regarding the Indian ancestry of the applicant and his/her spouse—"how much Indian" and "tribes if any." "Documentation of Indian ancestry as best [they] can," [Reed/Shapard interview, 11/15/82] and that most of the ULN members are Cherokee or Choctaw descendants. Mrs. Reed says the group has no illusions about being a tribe like the Hopis or the Navajos, but that they are rather a group of individuals of Indian ancestry who share a common interest.

Although the group has provided a current list of its members, it has not provided the genealogical information or documentation needed to establish the Indian ancestry of its members. Based on acknowledgment research and on evidence provided by the petitioner, we conclude that the group's membership has not established descendency from a tribe which existed historically or from historical tribes which combined and functioned as a single autonomous entity. We further conclude that even if genealogical information were provided for individual members, it is unlikely that documentary

evidence would establish the group's members as being descendants of a tribe which existed historically or from historical tribes which combined and functioned as a single autonomous entity. Therefore, the ULN does not meet the criterion in 25 CFR 83.7(e).

83.7(f) The membership of the petitioning group is composed principally of persons who are not members of any other North American Indian tribe.

The petitioner did not directly address this criterion. However, research by the Acknowledgment staff, ULN publications and correspondence, and statements by ULN members all indicate that the ULN is composed of individuals who claim membership in or descendance from a variety of recognized and unrecognized Indian tribes and groups, as well as some non-Indians. Because no personal information was provided for ULN members, it was not possible to verify or determine the extent to which ULN members were or were not enrolled in other tribes whether recognized or unrecognized.

Based on what little is known about the character of the ULN at this time, we conclude that the ULN does not meet criterion 83.7(f).

83.7(g) The petitioner is not, nor are its members, the subject of congressional legislation which has expressly terminated or forbidden the Federal relationship.

The petitioner states that the group is not nor has it ever been terminated by Congress and that their "membership does not belong to terminated tribes." (Reed to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 2/25/80) The ULN of North Carolina and America does not appear on the Bureau's official list of "Indian Tribes Terminated from Federal Supervision." Research revealed no legislation terminating or forbidding a Federal relationship with the ULN. We should point out, however, that due to the incomplete nature of the membership list submitted and the total lack of information concerning the Indian ancestry of individual members, it has not been possible to determine if specific individuals have been terminated or are members of groups which have been forbidden the Federal relationship.

We therefore conclude, based on what is known about the character of the group, that the ULN is not, nor are its members, the subject of congressional legislation which has expressly terminated or forbidden the Federal relationship and that the group has met the criterion in 25 CFR 83.7(g).

Lumbee Background

Because of the possibility of confusion caused by Webber's use of the name Lumbee, the following brief background of the Lumbee group is given here.

The Lumbees of Robeson County, North Carolina are a large unrecognized Indian group, estimated to have from 25,000 to 40,000 members. Although their members reside primarily in Robeson and adjacent counties, thousands of Lumbees are scattered throughout the United States. The Lumbees are the largest known unrecognized Indian group in this country. The group and several sub-groups have petitioned the Department of the Interior for recognition as an Indian tribe under 25 CFR 83.

The Lumbees came to the attention of the Department of the Interior in 1888 when a delegation came to Washington to seek recognition and assistance in educating Lumbee children. The request was denied on August 11, 1890 in a letter from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to W.L. Moore of Osborne, North Carolina citing lack of adequate funds to provide for the "immediate wards of the Government."

The Lumbees again sought recognition in 1910, during the period when the Eastern Cherokees were being enrolled. Although they were not recognized at that time, they succeeded in obtaining legislation in 1911 from the State of North Carolina which changed the name of the group from Croatans to "Indians of Robeson County." This was again changed to the Cherokee Indians of Robeson county in 1913.³

The Bureau of Indian Affairs researched the group in March 1912. The research was conducted by Mr. Charles T. Pierce, Supervisor of Indian Schools. He observed "there are but few full bloods among the Croatans [Lumbees] although one would readily class a large majority as being at least three-fourths Indian." Pierce further concluded that the State of North Carolina was providing adequately for the education of the Indians, although he noted he had not actually visited the schools.⁴

In 1912 and 1913, bills were introduced in the United States Congress to provide funds for construction and maintenance of a school for the Indians of Robeson County. The bill passed the Senate, even though the Department of Interior objected, but it died in the House committee. The Senate, however, passed Resolution 410 in 1914 directing the Secretary of the Interior to "cause an investigation to be made of the condition and tribal rights of the Indians of Robeson and adjoining counties of North Carolina." The report was done by a Mr. McPherson, apparently relying on the historical work of Hamilton McMillion, and was described by a Department official as being of "doubtful value." Notwithstanding this, the report contained some discussion about establishing a Federal Indian boarding school for the Lumbees, but no Federal school was established. A number of Lumbee children apparently attended the Indian boarding school Carlisle, Pennsylvania.⁵

In February 1935, a Joseph Brooks appealed to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to clarify the rights of the unorganized and unrecognized Indians in North Carolina under the recently passed Wheeler-Howard Act (Indian Reorganization Act). The question was referred to Felix Cohen, Departmental Solicitor, who replied in a memorandum dated April 8, 1935. Cohen expressed the opinion that the Lumbees could "participate in the benefits of the Wheeler-Howard Act only so far as individual members may be of one-half or more Indian blood." The Secretary of the Interior concurred with the Cohen opinion.⁶

The opinion ultimately led to the now infamous physical anthropometric study of the Lumbees in 1936 in which it was concluded that only 22 Lumbee people of 108 tested were one-half degree or more Indian blood. A year prior to the report (1935), the group acquired 9,399 acres of land under the Department of Agriculture's Resettlement Administration. The land, however, was not considered Indian land and was administered by the Department of Agriculture. It was sold in fee by that Department in the 1940's.⁷

In 1956, Congress passed legislation designating the Indians of Robeson County "Lumbee Indians of North Carolina." The Act provided that "nothing in this act shall make such Indians eligible for any services performed by the United States for Indians because of their status as Indians and none of the statutes of the United States which affect Indians because of their status as Indians shall be applicable to the Lumbee Indians."⁸

In recent years, several groups in Robeson and adjoining counties have petitioned for Federal acknowledgment under 25 CFR 83: the Hatteras Tuscarora (6-24-78), the Lumbee Regional Development Association (1-7-80), the Drowning Creek Tuscarora (2-25-81), and the Hoke County (NC) Cherokees (9-20-83).

**BACKGROUND OF THE UNITED LUMBEE NATION
OF
NORTH CAROLINA AND AMERICA**

So far as can be determined by the Federal Acknowledgment staff there is no social, cultural, genealogical or historical connection between the United Lumbee Nation of North Carolina and America with the Lumbees indigenous to Robeson and adjacent counties in North Carolina or to any other North American Indian tribe. While certain Lumbees may associate with the ULN, this appears to be only a very few individuals. The North Carolina Indian Commission and representatives of the Lumbees have strongly opposed any recognition of the ULN and have challenged the ULN's right to conduct any business using the Lumbee name.²¹

A predecessor group, the "Cherokee Nation-Iroquois" of Albany, Georgia first came to the attention of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in October 1976, when President Gerald Ford asked the Interior Department to respond to a letter from Chief Thunderbird Webber and War Chief Red Bird requesting recognition of the tribe and a grant of money or land.²² Earlier documents have been found that indicate in the spring of 1975 Webber was publishing The Cherokee Nation Times and Etowah American Indian News. He listed himself on the front page of the paper as "Chief Thunderbird Webber, Principal Chief - Grand Chief of the Etowah Cherokee Nation of Georgia and the United Hightower Indian Tribes of America." These organizations were the predecessor groups to the ULN, and following the historical sequence of Webber's activities in Georgia will allow a fuller understanding of later events.

By 1976, Webber dropped any reference to the Hightower Indian Tribes (a non-existent tribe), shortened his title to Principal Chief, and had letterhead stationery printed for the Etowah Cherokee Nation of Georgia. Webber mentioned in a July 1976 letter to a contemporary that he had been contacted by the American Indian Policy Review Commission with a request for information about his organization. He also noted in the same letter that he had received a card from the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) for membership "in their group HQ at Washington D.C." NCAI has no record of Webber's membership application or that of the ULN.²³

Webber complained in the same letter that it was difficult to get anything done because "our nation does not recognize the BIA. . . ." In the October 1976 letter to President Ford on letterhead stationery of the "Independent Cherokee Nation - Iroquois," he wrote that the United Cherokees of Georgia were "Cherokee people of Georgia and we have 27 tribes, about 1000 members. All we ask is that you give us a piece [sic] of land set apart from the rest where we can live our lives the way we want is that to [sic] much to ask." Webber also claimed to be the Grand War Chief of the Etowah Cherokee Nation and told the President that if he were not given what he wanted or the money for it that "we will take whatever actions is [sic] necessary to get what is ours." The Solicitor for the Department of the Interior responded on November 11, noting the matter of recognition of Indian tribes was under close review and that it would be some time before the question could be resolved.²⁴

In November 1976, Webber was interviewed by Joan McNeal, Managing Editor of Rural Georgia Magazine. Among other things, Webber noted in the interview that he was the Chief of the United Cherokee of Georgia which consisted of "twenty four tribes in 32 states and in Canada. We have roughly over 15,000 people in these tribes."²⁵ This constitutes a difference of three tribes and a growth of 14,000 members from the previous month.

Webber also noted in the interview that to be a member one must be "at least one-sixth degree Indian Blood and be able to prove it!" (A 1/6 degree blood quantum is an impossibility.) Webber noted that the group also adopted "other Indian people into our tribes. . . Chaw-Chaws [a non-existent group], Chicosaes [sic], we have even adopted some Apaches." Webber concluded the interview with a statement indicating his group wanted to get recognized in Georgia. (The complete interview is attached as Appendix B.)

Webber's increasing activity and visibility apparently led to pressure from State officials and from other unrecognized Indian leaders in Georgia who claim to have exposed him for attempting to get a "free ride on the Indians" by misleading them into projects profitable for himself. Webber was also criticized for obtaining donations from his church operation to help Indians which he used for personal purposes. (Over the years, Webber has been associated with several Pentecostal religious organizations: The Open Door Church Fellowship in Georgia, a form of the Native American Church in Virginia, and the Pentecostal Charismatic Holiness Church, Inc. International in California. Webber listed himself in a brochure from the latter as Bishop Dr. M. L. Webber, International President.) Under this pressure concerning his Indian and church activities, Webber dropped out of sight for several months, during which time he moved from Georgia to Virginia.²⁶

On June 25, 1977, Webber wrote to the Bureau of Indian Affairs requesting copies of the proposed Acknowledgment regulations and stating that the Lumbees were already a recognized tribe. He used letterhead stationery of the "United Lumbee Nation of North Carolina and America" and signed as "Grand Council Head Chief." Webber was forwarded a copy of the proposed regulations on October 28, 1977, and advised by the Department of the Interior's Acting Assistant Solicitor in the Division of Indian Affairs that the proposed regulations were probably not applicable to the group he represented.

In the meantime, Webber drafted and had printed a constitution and by-laws for the ULN with a post office box and address in Richmond, Virginia. The organization also received a corporate charter from the Commonwealth of Virginia on September 16, 1977.

A second charter was filed in North Carolina on February 3, 1978. Supporting documentation for an application for non-profit status indicated the ULN membership was composed of Lumbee Indians and other Indian people nationwide and was organized for the purpose of helping American Indian people to receive their equal rights as Indians and American citizens. Jim Chavis, a Lumbee, signed the application for non-profit status as "Grand Chief." A "to-whom-it-may-concern" letter appointing Chavis as Tribal Chief was signed by "Chief Thunderbird Webber Grand Council Head Chief." Mr. Webber's activities quickly attracted the attention of the Lumbees in North Carolina and the North Carolina State government. He was forced to leave a meeting at the North Carolina Indian Unity Day celebration by the Lumbees who were participating. Bruce Barton, editor of The North Carolina Indian Voice, a Lumbee newspaper for "all Indians and all their friends everywhere," insisted that Webber stop referring to The Indian Voice, in Webber's ULN newsletter. Webber had been ostensibly taking subscriptions for The Indian Voice. Barton alleged Webber was not of Indian ancestry and was basically a fake. Barton, in a letter to Webber, noted that many Indians across the nation had informed him that Webber was not Indian, that he knew little if anything about the Lumbee Indians, and called the ULN a questionable movement.²⁷ The Executive Director for the North Carolina Commission on Indian Affairs, Bruce Jones, himself a Lumbee, wrote Webber on July 7, 1977, and questioned Webber's authority to represent himself as a Lumbee Chief and questioned the authenticity of a number of societies

mentioned on the ULN application form. Jones noted that "No Lumbee that I know is acquainted with you, and we seriously question your authority to represent yourself as a Lumbee Chief." Jones further noted that he was requesting the Virginia Attorney General to investigate the legal status of the ULN.

In his response to Jones on July 18, Webber noted that there was a "little misunderstanding somewhere." He wrote that "we are no crooked racket to get money from Indians . . . We are out to promote the Lumbee cause . . . I do not represent all Lumbees only those of our group."

Notwithstanding Webber's disclaimers and the pressure from the Lumbees, the State of North Carolina, and to some extent the Commonwealth of Virginia, Webber continued to operate much as he had previously. This included selling memberships through his newspaper, The Lumbee Nation Times. Angered by Webber's tenacity, the Lumbees, through contacts with the North Carolina Congressional delegation, requested the U.S. postal service to investigate the ULN's mail-order membership activities.

There is no indication that Webber made any immediate changes in the ULN's operation as a result of the investigation. On June 10, 1978, Webber wrote the Federal Acknowledgment Staff that the ULN was planning to buy "thousands of acres of land in California and Oregon"; that the new tribal office would be in Portland, Oregon as of July 1978; and that the Lumbees were already recognized pursuant to the June 7, 1956 Act.²⁸ He also noted that the Lumbees in North Carolina were not on the ULN rolls and should be federally recognized. The letter is significant in that it indicates Mr. Webber appears to have made contacts in California. By January 10, 1979 Webber again wrote requesting "Guidelines of Preparing a Petition of Federal Acknowledgment" [sic] as an Indian Tribe and requested a copy be sent to Johnny "Silver Eagle" Reed in Exeter, California.

On January 22, 1979, Webber filed a letter formally petitioning the Department of the Interior for Federal Acknowledgment of the ULN. In the letter he noted that the "Greater Lumbee Confederacy covers three countries and is still growing with two governments. . . ."

Webber wrote again on March 5, 1979 confirming the fact that the ULN had petitioned with the January 22 letter and pressed the argument that the Lumbees were recognized through the 1956 Act. It appears that Mr. Webber moved the ULN operations entirely to California in the early Spring of 1979, and was himself residing in or near Exeter by May of that year.

Summary

According to Mr. Webber's account, he resigned his office as Chief of the Georgia Cherokees in November 1976 "to help the Lumbee people form the Lumbee into a Nation." Mr. Webber worked for a time with Jim Chavis, Lumbee, to form an organization incorporated in North Carolina and Virginia, and to recruit members including Lumbees, other Indians, and non-Indians.

Activities while in Virginia included selling subscriptions to his newsletter The Lumbee Nation Times; selling miscellaneous items such as business cards and pamphlets on how to trace family roots; and selling memberships in the organization for \$1.00 to \$3.00. Webber also made extensive efforts to establish his credibility, at least at a certain level. He attended unrecognized Indian gatherings up and down the East Coast, espoused legitimate Indian causes in his newsletters, and claimed personal responsibility for the passage of legislation recognizing the Siletz Indian Tribe.³⁰ His activities soon captured

the attention of the Lumbees in North Carolina who were facing their own public image problem and who perceived the ULN as a detriment to their good name, and a threat to their aspirations for Federal acknowledgment and other Federal programs. Both North Carolina and Virginia expressed official concern about the ULN activities and the Postal Service, at the request of North Carolina's Congressman Charlie Rose, began an investigation of Webber's activities. Under this pressure, Webber moved to California.

**BACKGROUND
OF
THE CALIFORNIA LUMBEE**

When Webber moved to California he attached himself first to an urban group called the Native American Wolf Clan (NAWC). The Wolf Clan was organized by Mrs. Ruby Boyer when she became unhappy about a citizens band radio club with which a number of the family's children were associated. She suggested to Mrs. Eva Reed, her aunt, that they establish their own organization, a charitable and educational club to benefit Indian people. Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Boyer also noted that the NAWC was also formed partially in an effort to improve operation of the Title IV Indian Education program in the local schools.³¹

NAWC achieved some success locally in Exeter and vicinity, and received some publicity in Bishinik, a now-defunct newspaper printed by the Choctaw Indian Nation in Oklahoma, a recognized tribe. Shortly after publication of the article Mr. Webber contacted the Reeds and offered to get the group Federal recognition, tax free land, and Federal benefits. Webber also told them that since they had such a large following he was going to make them Chiefs of the "Meherrin Lumbee Tribe."

The Reeds and Mrs. Boyer were impressed by Mr. Webber's offers and agreed to meld the NAWC into the ULN's organization. The resultant organization became the expanded ULN with Chief Thunderbird Webber at the helm and with the Reeds essentially second in command. Correspondence and records indicate that the Reeds and Mrs. Boyer continued to maintain the NAWC as a separate operation from the ULN, but as a part of it. The Reeds kept control of the NAWC. The NAWC retained its urban character throughout. Individual members are now apparently scattered all over the United States. Membership included individuals from the Mission, Cherokee, Choctaw, Blackfeet, Lumbee and other tribes, and non-Indians as well.³²

Under the reorganization of the ULN, a board of directors was created consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Webber, Mr. and Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Boyer. The new ULN was primarily comprised of urban Indian-interest groups in Exeter and Porterville, California. Both contained members of the original NAWC which remained under the administrative and financial control of the Reeds and Mrs. Boyer. Webber added individuals to the rolls whom he had recruited in Georgia and Virginia and with whom the group kept in contact through The Lumbee Nation Times.

The NAWC gave Webber and his wife Marie Reiners Webber (Princess Sunflower Morningstar) \$500 dollars for moving expenses. Other informants noted that the group collected \$600 a month to pay Webber a salary. This continued until he moved to Oatman, Arizona in 1980. After that the group funded some office expenses for a time. Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Boyer say that Webber received similar amounts from other members of the group. Because of Mr. and Mrs. Reed's and Mrs. Boyer's involvement in the Title IV Indian Education program, Webber was also able to obtain a position as Indian program worker in the local school system of Visalia, California.

Those who were members of the ULN during this period now have widely varying views on Webber's activities and his leadership, some declaring he was a scoundrel and a fraud and others saying that he "was the greatest thing that ever happened." One member noted that "Thunderbird was really into helping people."³³

According to members of the group Webber's activities included the following:

1. Wrote numerous letters and made many phone calls on behalf of the group purportedly seeking treaty rights.
2. Fought to enroll members' children in the Title IV program.
3. "Got the ball rolling and got people interested in the organization" (i.e., recruited members)
4. Pressed the Federal Government for Federal recognition of the group as an Indian tribe, primarily through letters to the Branch of Federal Acknowledgment.
5. Oversaw collection and disbursement of money. Activities included bake sales, garage sales, and other similar activities.
6. Incorporated the organization and filed for tax-exempt status.
7. The NAWC sponsored an all-Indian rescue unit which apparently raised some funds separately. It is unclear how involved Webber was with this aspect of the operation.
8. Eventually, a major fund-raising project evolved in which members pledged \$3500 each ("which can be paid in cash or on a payment plan") for a share of a land base which was to be purchased when everyone had completed payments on their \$3500 share and an appropriate land base could be found.³⁴

Webber also tried to establish a relationship between the group and the Tule River Tribe (a recognized Indian Tribe) based on "common treaty interests." The leadership of Tule River courteously declined to associate with the ULN or with a subsequent organization, the Kaweah Indian Nation (KIN). The Tule River Tribe's position, spelled out in a council resolution, was not to recognize, support or endorse Webber's organization or any of its activities.³⁵ Members of the Tule River Tribe were told by several members of the ULN that Webber would bring potential recruits on auto tours through the reservation to show them tribal buildings, land areas, etc. and intimated that these were benefits they would receive if they joined his group. A "life time roll donation per family \$10.00, if you have it"³⁶ was the standard membership fee at this time. The recruitment effort was apparently successful. After the ULN split into two groups (the ULN and the Kaweah Indian Nation (KIN)) in 1980, the ULN or the Exeter group claimed about 1700 members and the KIN (Porterville group) claimed about 1500 members. It is unclear if there is an overlapping of the membership.

The recruitment efforts were, however, extensive enough to raise official concern by the Tulare County Deputy District Attorney who wrote the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on April 6, 1979. He stated that:

Persons associated with the United Lumbee Nation have been recruiting members in the Exeter, California tribe. They have been collecting initiation fees of \$10.00. For payment of these fees they are adopted into the Lumbe [sic] Nation, and as I understand it are told they can now apply for federal and state benefits that only Indians are eligible for. I have talked to the members of the Lumbe tribe in Exeter and they have told me that they will only accept into their membership people that have a claim to at least some Indian blood. They have also told me that many of these members apply because this, they believe, makes them eligible for Federal benefits and admission into the Exeter tribe.³⁷

The Deputy District Attorney inquired as to the requirements for tribal membership and receipt of Federal benefits and suggested the possible illegality for solicitation of such membership.

Recruiting success for the ULN, however, was the harbinger of problems for the group. As the group's bank account grew, several meetings were held concerning the land purchase. The goal was to purchase 2½ acres of land on which to establish camp sites, a pow-wow ground and an economic enterprise. Mrs. Reed was selected to go to Northern California to find a site.

According to one faction of the group, in her absence Mr. Webber went through the financial records of the group and found that the group's funds were being transferred to the NAWC account which was in Reed's and Boyer's name. Reed and Boyer were able to do this because they were the Secretary and Treasurer of both the ULN and the NAWC and because they had a majority on the board of directors (Reed-Reed-Boyer/Webber-Webber). Another faction of the group maintains that Webber attempted to take all of the group's funds and that the Reed/Boyer faction managed to save the funds by virtue of their positions on the board and their astute management.

The dispute over the group's funds caused a major split in the ULN, much along geographic lines, developing early in 1980. On August 17 of 1980, Webber addressed the following brief letter to John and Eva Reed: "This letter is to inform you that you and your family and other kin have been removed from the nation. Also all wolf clan [sic] members who associate with you. We don't need you in our nation. Since when do you tell me what to do the FOUNDER and GRAND COUNCIL HEAD CHIEF of the nation." By December of that year, the strife was over and two factions existed. Those in Exeter primarily stayed with the Reeds and retained the name of the ULN. Those in Porterville remained loyal, for the most part, to Webber and took on the new name of the Kaweah Indian Nation (KIN) in the summer of 1980. It is unclear which individuals went with which group, and which members remained with both since both groups continued to use the same list of members or parts of it. The reformed ULN now claims over 2,000 members and the KIN reports it has "about 1500 members."

Mr. and Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Boyer moved the "Lumbee Nation Main Office" to Fall River Mills in Northern California and continued to operate in a more subdued manner from there. Mr. Reed died in 1981.

Mrs. Reed says she has purchased 2½ acres with her own money which she intends to give to the tribe when she has been repaid. She and Mrs. Boyer continue to print the Lumbee Nation Times and charge \$10.00 for membership which covers "the cost of printing the membership cards and mailing."

Mrs. Reed makes no promises to prospective members and claims that the local organizations are "what the members make of them." Some funds are raised by bake sales and contributions. Some funds have been obtained through grants—one from America Beautiful (\$500) and one from Shasta County (\$200) for arts and crafts. Local organizations apparently send some funds to Mrs. Reed for the national organization.

Mrs. Reed apparently has no illusions about the ULN being a tribe "like the Hopis or Navajos." She views her group as individuals of Indian ancestry with a common interest and began using the terms "tribe" and "Chief" in this context. She also noted that they were somewhat locked into the terminology when they joined with Webber's organization.

Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Boyer appear to equate the concept of ULN ("Nation") with a national organization and ("tribe") with local organizations, and are unaware of ramifications of those terms as they apply in Federal Indian law. It is clear from interviews with a number of members and from correspondence received in the

Acknowledgment office that this is extremely confusing to members and recruits in those organizations, and that many if not most new members believe they are joining a genuine Indian tribe.

The present ULN leadership is aware of the concerns caused by the use of the name Lumbee to the actual Lumbees but feels it would be impossible to change without totally confusing the membership. Mrs. Reed expresses a hope that the Lumbees understand that she and her members view it as a tribute to the Lumbees; that she is out to assist all Indians and that she is not trying to capitalize on the Lumbee name financially. She says she sends her newsletters to the North Carolina Indian Commission, the Lumbee Regional Development Association, and the library at Pembroke College in North Carolina. She claims to have had no problems with the Lumbees since the split with Webber.

**Summary of ULN Activities in California
Prior To Factionization of the Group**

1. Webber spent a good deal of time seeking Federal recognition, treaty rights, and relationships with recognized tribes on behalf of the ULN. He was singularly unsuccessful, but his efforts had a substantial impact on the group.
2. The NAWC had an emergency rescue squad in training, apparently when Webber arrived in California. This continued to operate under the larger scope of the ULN when the ULN and the NAWC joined.
3. The Lumbee Nation Times continued to be published in a more sophisticated (and expensive) format. Subscriptions were sold for \$4.00.
4. Recruitment of members continued and expanded with the help of the enthusiastic California members, and membership fees increased to \$10.00
5. Several small books were published by the group and sold for \$2.00. These included such titles as United Lumbee Nation History, The United Lumbee Constitution and By - Laws, and United Lumbee Ceremonies.
6. The group also instituted a number of other activities to raise money including bake sales, garage sales, etc.
7. The leadership of the group developed a program to collect \$3500 from each member-family to purchase 2½ acres of tribal land.
8. The group received a small piece of land donated by a well-wisher in Coffeville, Kansas. The ultimate disposition of this land is unclear, although the Lumbee Nation Times has carried several advertisements offering the land for sale after the Reed's split with Webber, leading to the conclusion that the Reed/Boyer faction gained title to the property.

**Summary of ULN Activities in California
After The Factionization of the Group**

1. The Reeds and Mrs. Boyer moved to Northern California in the vicinity of Fall River Mills. They apparently were able to keep many records of the ULN and continued to operate much as the group had prior to the split but on a much smaller scale.
2. ULN has received at least two small grants for development of arts and crafts.
3. The leadership of the group continues to publish a newsletter.
4. Membership registrations continue to be accepted for a ten dollar fee and there are apparently a substantial number of "tribes" (local groups) in the "nation" scattered about the country.
5. The land acquisition program has been continued but the present format is unclear. The group has apparently acquired 5 acres of land and members are now buying 7.5 additional acres.
6. Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Boyer are occasionally asked to put on arts and crafts demonstrations and to speak at schools.
7. The group has continued to recruit members with a high degree of success.
8. Plans have been drawn to put an administrative complex on the group's land which would include a museum, media office, administrative office and a campground.

FOOTNOTES

1. Personal interview with Eva Reed and Ruby Boyer, executives, ULN. Fall River Mills, California November 5, 1982.
2. Reed and Boyer, November 5, 1982.
3. Memorandum from D'Arcy McNickle, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, DC to files concerning Indians of Robeson County, North Carolina. Washington, DC May 1, 1935. pg 4, and 63rd Congress, 3 Session, Senate Document No 677. "Indians of North Carolina," Washington, 1915 BFA Files.
4. McNickle, May 1, 1935 pp 2-3.
5. McNickle, May 1, 1935 pg 2.
6. Memorandum from Felix S. Cohen to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. April 8, 1935.
7. McNickle, May 1, 1935 pg 4.
8. 70 Stat. 254, "The Lumbee Act."
9. Letter from Kenneth R. Maynor Executive Director, Lumbee Regional Development Association to Ralph Reeser, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs. July 1980.
10. ULN information pamphlet, 1980. Exeter Printing Co., Exeter, California.
11. Letter from Malcolm Webber to the Director, Office of Indian Service, June 25, 1977.
12. "Tribal Directory," Lumbee Nation Times, Spring 1981, Vol. 3, No. 1, pg 2.
13. Wilma Cisco and Su Wyatt, "Inside the 'Kaweah Nation'," California Indian Journal May-June 1981, Vol. 1, Pub 6, pp 2-4.
14. Reed and Boyer, November 5, 1982, and ULN Clarified and Amended Constitution and Bylaws. March 12, 1981.
15. Reed and Boyer, November 5, 1982.
16. Reed and Boyer, November 5, 1982.
17. Telcon interview with Eva Reed. October 27, 1982.
18. Reed and Boyer, November 5, 1982.
19. Maynor to Reeser, July 1980.
20. Reed and Boyer, November 5, 1982, and ULN Clarified and Amended Constitution and Bylaws, March 12, 1981, and Thompson, October 20, 1983.

21. Maynor to Reeser, July 1980, and letter from Bruce Jones, Executive Director State of North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs to Chief Thunderbird Webber, July 7, 1977, and letter from Bruce Barton, Editor, The Carolina Indian Voice to Chief Thunderbird Webber, July 19, 1977. BFA Files.
22. Letter from War Chief Red Bird and Chief Thunderbird Webber to President Gerald Ford, October 16, 1976. BFA Files.
23. Letter from Chief Thunderbird to Chief Greywolf, July 6, 1876. BFA Files.
24. Letter from H. Gregory Austin, Department of the Interior Solicitor to Mr. Thunderbird Webber, November 11, 1976.
25. "Rural Georgia Profile," Rural Georgia Magazine, November 1976.
26. Telephone interview with recognized group leaders in various southern states, May 1, 1980 through December 30, 1983.
27. Barton to Webber, July 10, 1977.
28. 70 Stat. 254.
29. Letter from Thunderbird Webber to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, January 22, 1979.
30. Meeting and individual interviews with members of the Kaweah Indian nation, Porterville, California November 7, 1982.
31. Reed and Boyer, November 5, 1982.
32. Reed and Boyer, November 5, 1982.
33. Reed and Boyer, November 5, 1982 and meeting and individual interviews with members of the Kaweah Indian Nation, Porterville, California November 7, 1982.
34. Letter from Chief Silver Eagle Reed to "Land Share Holders", Exeter, California August 27, 1980 and Letter from Chief Silver Eagle Reed to members of ULN, January 15, 1980 Exeter, California.
35. Meeting with Tule River tribal officials, Tule River Reservation, California, November 8, 1982.
36. "Application for membership in ULN" Lumbee Nation Times, winter 1980-81, Vol. 2, No 4. pg 3.
37. Letter from Andrew Gindes, Deputy District Attorney to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, April 6, 1979.

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- 11-01-82 Interview with Malcolm Webber, Kingman Arizona.
- 11-1-3-82 Interviews with tribal leaders and staff of the Colorado River Indian Tribes, Parker, Arizona
- 11-1-9-82 Interviews with law enforcement officials in Mohave County, Arizona; Colorado River Indian Reservation; and Tulare County, California.
- 11-02-82 Personal interviews with citizens and Chamber of Commerce leaders of Oatman Arizona, Oatman, Arizona.
- 11-02-82 Meeting with members of "Mayca Lumbee Tribe" (a ULN group) in Quartzsite, Arizona.
- 11-05-82 Eva Reed and Ruby Boyer, Executives, United Lumbee Nation of North Carolina and America. Fall River Mills, California.
- 11-6/8-82 Interviews and discussions with anthropologist Mitch Cantwell, Porterville, California.
- 11-07-82 Meeting and individual interviews with members of the Kaweah Indian Nation, Porterville, California.
- 11-08-82 Su Wyatt Manuel, author of "Inside the 'Kaweah Nation'" and presently editor of the Tule River newspaper, Whispering Winds.
- 11-08-82 Interview with tribal leaders and staff of the Tule River Indian Tribe, Tule River, California.
- 11-10-82 Interview with Rachel Joseph, Coordinator of California Governor's Office of American Indians, Sacramento, California.
- 05-1-80/
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7. Virginia Lumbee Nation Times. Richmond, Virginia.
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Inside the "Kaweah Nation" (A)

By Wilma Cloce & Sa Wyatt

The following is an interview with Malcolm Webber, self-styled leader of the "Kaweah Indian Nation" which he started in 1980. The group has caused controversy with the local Indian community. The taped interview was conducted April 27, 1981 two days after the "Kaweah Indian Nation's" Potluck held in Hanford. Webber is a resident of Porterville.

CLJ: "I heard that you had a potluck yesterday. How did it go?"

WEBBER: "We had a potluck and a big council meeting. They passed a resolution and different things, you know."

They're gonna get all the old Kaweah Indian tribal land and burial grounds and put a fence around them. Some of the old markers we've traced around Lemon Cove and that area from the old Kaweah tribe and other tribes and other tribes in the area. We're gonna get a fence around them so the kids of the future can have them."

CLJ: "When did your organization come about?"

WEBBER: "What, the Kaweah tribe? There has always been a Kaweah tribe but there hasn't been a tribal council for 100 years until last September. I think the last tribal council they had was in 1855 or '6, I think, before the 1980's. That's when they formed the tribe was back in September of 1980 and the last tribal council they had before that was in 1856. That's a long time."

CLJ: "How many members do you have?"

WEBBER: "Roughly about 5,000."

CLJ: "And that's in that area Tulare County/Porterville area?"

WEBBER: "This area?"

CLJ: "Yes."

WEBBER: "I'd say we have about 1,500 in this area."

CLJ: "Then you cover Kings and Tulare counties?"

WEBBER: "Kings, Tulare and Fresno. The biggest response has been in like Kings, Tulare and Fresno but then there is some scattered all over the state."

CLJ: "Do you have a goal or purpose for your council?"

WEBBER: "One of our goals is to get our rancherias back. You see, we got one rancheria, San Juan Bautista over in Hollister. We're working to get that back. Then we got one down here about 1,400 acres. There is about five rancherias involved and we're trying to get them back."

The people moved off of them because there was no tribal government because they couldn't get no grants, so they had to move off. Now they want to get them back and have a tribal government."

We're also working on to see if we can get our treaty ratified, (the one signed in 1851). If we can get it ratified that means the others tribes too will have a chance to get their's."

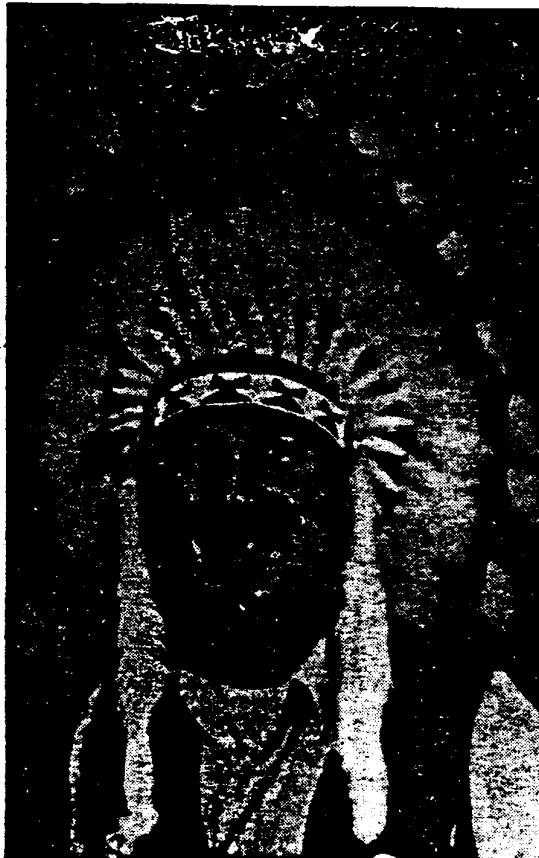
Those 18 treaties, your probably acquainted with what's involved. We're working to see if we can push ours to get it ratified."

We're working on quite a few Congressmen to help us and if we can get ours pushed through maybe we can help others to get their's pushed too. The other tribes don't have a chance too, until the point when they get their treaties ratified."

You see, what happened is when they signed these treaties back in 1851, (about eighteen of them), the following year the Senate just put them on the shelf because of the gold rush. The gold rush messed up the American Indian in California and so they just put the treaties on the shelf. This is the reason they were never recognized."

Some of the other tribes now, I believe, are trying to push their treaties too. So I think if everybody gets together and works strong I believe we can get something done."

But we're trying to push everything we can 'cause right now I'm writing letters to California congressmen trying to keep funds in the State 'cause right now they



Malcolm Webber

are cutting California down pretty short, (which is not right if we're the second largest state in the union for Indian population).

So they've been holding council meetings on that and the different Kaweah tribes all the way from Bakersfield up."

They're trying to get different tribal groups to work together, you know, so that everybody will have a chance to get something down and everybody can get what belongs to them. It's alot of work, especially when you got alot of people you're responsible to and have to listen to a lot of other spokespersons and chiefs too."

CLJ: "How are you going to go about getting the treaty ratified?"

WEBBER: "We're gonna work through Congress, through the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Congress."

CLJ: "The Bureau of Indian Affairs?"

WEBBER: "Uh-huh. You see it has to be ratified in the U.S. Congress through the Senate and the House of Representatives. You see, they are the one's that have to prove it."

So what we're doing now is writing to the different Congressmen of the Indian committees and the Senate and Indian committees at the House of Representatives. Each one of the members we're writing a letter to plus some of the other senators to support us."

CLJ: "Is CILS (California Indian Legal Services) representing you also?"

WEBBER: "Yeah. They're helping us out."

CLJ: "Whatever happened to the Indian Center that was going to be built in Porterville?"

WEBBER: "They gonna change it. I think they gonna put it in Hanford but they still gonna put one in Porterville. They got one planned for Poterville and Woodlake. They're planning a powwow ground in Woodlake. They are planning to have a powwow in Woodlake next year. So this will be something new."

CLJ: "How are you going to get the money for that?"

WEBBER: "I don't know now, see, we got grant money out now, you know. We've applied for grants. So, I don't know how they are gonna work that 'cause I'm not in charge of that so I can't tell you too much."

The council chief's the one working on it and he's gone out on a council with some other chief's the one working on it and he's gone out on a council with some other chiefs from Hanford. I'll have to ask him for that information 'cause each one of the chief's got their own thing, you know, their own little project."

CLJ: "You have committees?"

WEBBER: "Yeah. I don't know that they come tell me what's goin' on. Most of the time I don't know what's goin' on unless the tribal chairman tells me something. See, we got three councils, you know. We have a tribal council who's run by a chairman and vice-chairman. Then we got what you call an Indian tribal council you know, with a member from each Kaweah tribe on it. Then you have the council of chiefs. So, you have to hear from a speaker from each one of them so you really know what's going on half the time."

CLJ: "Are you the head of all of that then?"

WEBBER: "I'm the head of the council of chiefs. I'm the main chief. I have the say so but it still has to be voted on."

We plan on coming out with our tribal newspaper too. It's gonna be called the Kaweah Nation Times. It's gonna come out some time in May. It will be mailed out to quite a few people."

CLJ: "What is your definition of chief?"

WEBBER: "Grand council head chief."

CLJ: "What kind of powers does he have?"

WEBBER: "Life. You see, you have grand council head chief which is a lifetime. Grand council head chief is a lifetime job."

After me comes the vice-grand council head chief. If anything happens to me he takes over. Then after him comes the principal chief, then the vice-principal chief and so on.

There is a lot of law involved, like a book. See, we got a constitution drawn up for the BIA, for whenever you see, we are on the active list for federal recognition right now.

We already have our constitution set up on federal guidelines. Some of the other tribes, (federally recognized tribes), are helping us. See, the Navajos and the Hopis and the Colorado River and some them back in the south. So that helps."

CLJ: "Where do you get your names, like you name?"

WEBBER: "My name? Whoa. I had that a long time. That's my Indian name. I had that a long time. When I was a boy I was called Greywolf. As I got older they called me Thunderbird. You see, I was named after my uncle. He was Chief Thunderbird. So, they call me Chief Thunderbird."

You see, he was a chief here in California at one time, then in Washington and then in British Columbia. I don't know what tribe up in British Columbia he was chief of. I don't know I lost contact with him but from what I heard he went to British Columbia.

CLJ: "You were telling me one time you were raised on the Pine Ridge Reservation?"

WEBBER: "No. Uh-uh. Standing Rock. I got kinfolk on Pine Ridge, that's where my mother's from. She's French and Oglala Sioux."

My dad he's full-blood. He's Standing Rock Sioux, Cherokee, Comanche, Navajo and Apache. He's well mixed. But, he was a Cherokee chief at one time, he was a Sioux chief at one time, then he was a Navajo chief one time. I guess he was a band chief or something."

CLJ: "And what was his name?"

WEBBER: "He was chief Crazy Horse Webber. See, Chief Crazy Horse was my great grandfather. See, my grandmother was Princess Running Fawn Crazy Horse. I never saw her 'cause she died when I was only twelve years old, so, I don't even know what she looks like."

CLJ: "Who raised you then?"

WEBBER: "My mother and everything. This was when my mother was twelve years old when her mother died. Her mother was a Sioux princess through the Crazy Horse family."

I'm kin to Red Cloud too. I haven't figured out how yet. I'm kin to Silver Cloud Elliot too, he's dead now. He died in 1969. He was a member of the Porcupine clan up there in Pine Ridge. He was a grandson to Red Cloud and suppose to be my mother's first cousin...so I don't know what I am yet. Maybe the great-uncle. I don't know."

CLJ: "Do you have any kind of cultural activities?"

WEBBER: "Right now we're not doing too much but we plan on teaching the young people dancing and teach them craft work and later on the Kaweah language and so on. We got all this coming up in the future."

CLJ: "Do you know how to speak the Kaweah language?"

WEBBER: "I can speak a little."

CLJ: "Do you have a BIA roll number?"

WEBBER: "A BIA roll number? The BIA don't put out roll numbers. I had one. I had a Western Cherokee roll number but I don't have it now. You see, I 'pioneered out' to the Navajos to my step-father, (my Navajo step-father). I 'pioneered' from the Navajos to here now."

See, I carry the Kaweah Indian roll number now. I surrendered my Cherokee. See, like I don't know if you realize how it works but if you transfer from one tribe to the next they give you like a year probation and they give you your family history and they pass it on to the next tribe. That's what the Navajo's call 'pioneer out.'

See like to give you an example, I can identify with Colorado River. I've been up there four times and to give you an example...like you are a member of the Navajo Nation, a roll number one

and everything. Let's say you 'pioneer out' and go to the Colorado River. O.K. they put you on a year probation in which you're still on the roll but you are on probation to the next tribe. At the end of the year if you decide to go back, you go. If you decide to stay in the new tribe they transfer your roll papers to the next tribe."

A lot of tribes do that you know. Cherokees do the same thing. They all do it. They send a blood-quantum sheet to the next tribe with the family history. That way the other tribe knows a little bit about the family history."

I learned a lot of that through my kinfolk. A lot of that I didn't know, I learned myself...especially when I was Cherokee."

You see, I was the chief of the Cherokees for three years, so I was a Cherokee, the principal chief of the land."

I gave up my membership and everything. Chief Aquila of the Oklahoma Cherokees was the chief of the Cherokees back then he made me chief. I don't know who's chief for 'em now. I've lost contact with them now. So I've got kinfolk in quite a few reservations."

CLJ: "You were also chief of the Lumbee's weren't you?"

WEBBER: "Yes. For a short time. I founded the United Lumbees. When North Carolina got their own I put it out of business. I pulled out. The Hopis wanted me to get the Kaweah going. The Kaweah tribe suppose to be some kin to the Hopi and Shoshone tribe. We've been writing history and everything else. It's a lot of work to take something that's been and just try and get it going again. It's a lot of work."

CLJ: "The Kaweah Indian Nation--does BIA recognize them?"

WEBBER: "We're on the federally active list right now for recognition. We're already state recognized. Now we're on the federally active list for federal recognition and everything. Some of the people call us federally recognized just because we have a treaty but still it has to be approved, you know."

Even though you have a treaty you still have to go through a committee and everything and BIA. But we're on the active list. There's quite a few tribes on the active list."

CLJ: "I remember one time

Below is the letter sent to CLJ in response to questions about the Lumbee Nation. The letter, written February 2, 1981 is signed Malcolm Webber who identified himself in the letter as Chief Thunderbird Webber, Grand Council Head Chief.

"Thank you for your letter to us on the Lumbees. Please note the United Lumbee Nation of N.C. and America, INC. of Exeter, CA. is no longer a tribe. It is now the Kaweah Nation. The Lumbee Nation Times is now

the Kaweah Nation Times. The old United Lumbee roll cards are no longer any good."



In an April 30, 1981 phone interview, the Bureau of Indian Affairs' enrollment specialist, Ramona Harris, said the Kaweahs are not a recognized tribe.

"No, no, no," said Harris. "They're not. They're not a recognized tribe and are not receiving any Bureau services or anything else."

when the Lumbee people were in Exeter, they had a 'reservation'."

WEBBER: "They had their own land. Like a little, small rancheria. They had their own land but they sold it all out. They don't have nothing in Exeter now."

CLJ: "How about the Kaweahs? Are they going to get a reservation of their own?"

WEBBER: "Yeah. We're working on it. See, that's through these rancherias. So, it don't know what the governments gonna do yet. We just have to wait on it. They'll be some land when it comes through the government. We're trying to get as close to the old Kaweah homeland but all we got now is orange trees. That don't help much."

CLJ: "You still have your police force and all that?"

WEBBER: "Yeah. We still have our tribal police. But we're not using it now. It's temporarily on reserve till we get our land."

We have our warrior society which does the police work. They do that type of stuff...help police the area, you know, do the minor things, act as sargent of arms, see that everything is kept in order."

The police are on stand-by right now. That's 'cause we talked to the federal government on that and got some new ruling on that. It's being set right now."

CLJ: "Of all the people in the Kaweah Indian Nation, how do you find them? Do they find you or do you actively recruit them?"

WEBBER: "A lot of people right now, we have four or five people come through Santa Rosa. No not Santa Rosa, I mean San Juan

Baptista group, you know and some are the old Kaweah group. We got some inter tribal people too but they have to be at least one fourth to be on the roll. We don't take nobody less than one fourth."

CLJ: "How do you find out if they are?"

WEBBER: "Oh, they have to fill out an application. You've seen the JOM (Johnson O'Malley Program), haven't you? It's like that. We already talked it over with the government about it and everything and they approved it. It goes through the parents, grandparents, great-grandparents."

CLJ: "Where do you send it to have it verified?"

WEBBER: "We do it ourselves. But roll numbers we send to the BIA in Washington. We keep things on file that later on agency copies are made of it...birth certificates and stuff like that."

CLJ: "Do you have a religion?"

WEBBER: "Me? I'm Pentacostal."

CLJ: "You haven't practiced the Indian religion?"

WEBBER: "Oh, I know the Indian religion. I go on the reservation I do. But I'm a deacon in the colony of Bible Holman's church, which is made up of mostly Indians, you know."

Most of the preachers are Indian, you know. The regular Native Indian religion I don't fight it because I've got an uncle who's a medicine man and everything. He's a Christian but he's a medicine man. I got some kin that's on the reservation that's medicine man but they're not

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Christian. I still respect my old tradition. Just 'cause I'm Christian doesn't mean I can't respect my people."

CIJ: "I just found out that you are a reverend."

WEBBER: "Yeah. I carry a doctrine and am bishop for the East Colony Bible Holman International. We have churches in India too, you know and we have two in Australia and South America with Indian groups down there. But we're not a big group. I think we have about one hundred churches in India. Over here we don't even have that many."

We're getting a church started down here in Porterville for the Indian people and one in Hanford. Practically all Indian I guess, mostly Kaweah and Tachi.

In Hanford, we got Tachi and Kaweah and some other tribes at the church over there going. Over here mostly Kaweahs in Porterville there from outside of Tule, no non-Indians. So practically an all-Indian church."

CIJ: "I was reading where you are going to be writing a book of traditional customs of the Kaweah?"

WEBBER: "Yeah. I got some already written. We got a lot of stuff. We got a lot of the traditional ways and we got some that I can't write. The warrior society has their own ceremonies and they don't want to give it out to white people. We've got places around like Lemon Cove, Woodlake and Three Rivers. We got places up there people never been. Our tribe's with the help of a couple of Hopis, their gonna put a shrine over there."

Only a handful of people is gonna know were it is. I'll hide it, you know, for the medicine, so that's gonna be something.

See my uncle, Tom Rolieve, he's a Navajo and Hopi. He's a medicine man for the Hopi Nation and he's loaned out to the Kaweah Nation as a medicine man. If he dies they send us another medicine man from there and he's trained. We'll be trained medicine men.

Our vice-chairman, he's from the Comanche tribe. He's on lease from the Comanche people to help us."

CIJ: "Are you writing the book yourself or are there other people helping you?"

WEBBER: "I'm writing the book but I got a lot of other people helping me. I'm

picking up information here and there. There is a lot of information around Woodlake I don't know about."

We're picking up a lot of information here and there from the elders. We're picking up some of the Kaweah language. We're gonna put a dictionary together and put some on tape. That's gonna be a job in itself. We're getting a little piece here and a little piece there. You read like in 'California Indian Handbook,' they got a little piece like about one paragraph about Kaweah Indians, tells where the village was in Lemon Cove and that's all. What good is that? You ain't telling nobody nothin' 'bout 'cha."

In one Indian book they have the name Kaweah and show you how to pronounce it and that's all. They don't help nobody that wants information."

The following is a response to statements that California Indian Legal Service (CILS) represents the Kaweah Indian Nation. The letter was written to Vic White of the Selma Indian Education Association on April 7, 1981.

Thank you for your telephone call of April 7, informing us that various elders in your area were upset by a story in the Hanford Sentinel stating that CILS represents or has represented the group which styles itself the Kaweah Indian Nation. Although we have not seen the story, and thus cannot comment on its overall accuracy, we can state that we do not now, nor have we ever represented any group calling itself an Kaweah Indian Nation; moreover, we have not made any statements which reasonably could be construed as implying such representation.

During the last week of March, we spoke with a reporter from the Sentinel about the 18 unratified treaties and the 1944 judgement of the U.S. Court of Claims which purported to compensate California Indians for the lands which were to be set aside under the unratified treaties. During that conversation the reporter mentioned that the

Kaweah Indian Nation was seeking to claim the lands specified in the unratified treaty of May 13, 1851; we limited our comment to the complexity and difficulty of such an undertaking.

During the past couple of weeks we have been asked by several people in the Hanford/Visalia area to send them copies of this treaty. We fulfilled that request, as we often fulfill similar requests from various parts of California. However, in fulfilling those requests, we have expressly disclaimed any intent or commitment to render legal advice or representation.

Needless to say, we are disturbed that incorrect reports about CILS have appeared in the local press. We would appreciate your advising us of any similar reports in the future, so that we may take necessary corrective measures.

Very truly yours,
CALIFORNIA INDIAN
LEGAL SERVICES
George Forman

National Indian Media Conference

CIJ's managing editor and editor were among the 500 participants from the United States and Canada who attended the Fifth Annual National Indian Media Conference held May 4-7 in Spokane, Washington.

The three day conference included workshops in print, radio and TV. Of special interest to the CIJ

participants were the workshops on writing/reporting techniques, the Freedom of Information Act, design and layout and public relations.

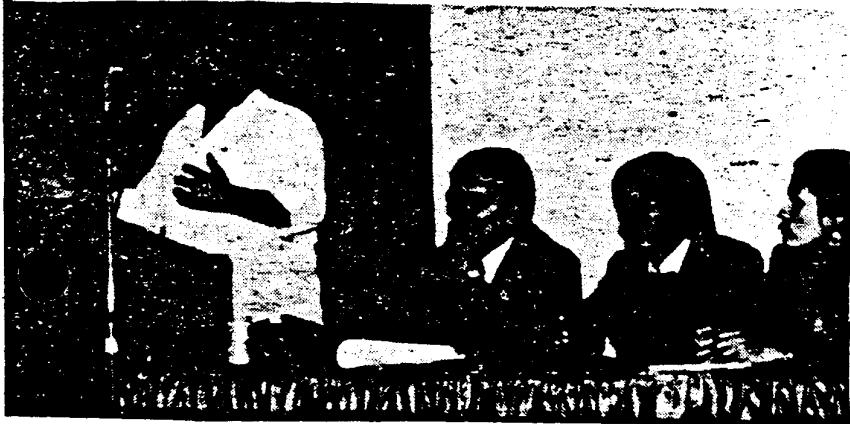
Special events during the conference included the Media Man/Woman of the Year awards, a salmon Bar-B-Que hosted by the United Indians of All Tribes

Foundation of Seattle and a dance with the Indian band Greywolf providing the music."

The conference was sponsored by the Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium and American Indian Film Institute.



Jose Rivera, Puerto Rican lawyer, gave the keynote address at the National Indian Media Conference. Rivera urged the gathering of Indian media representatives to closely scrutinize issues affecting American Indians.



Lee Thundercloud, Media Specialist of Native American Committee, Inc. of Chicago, presents ideas for the 1982 NIMC. One of the recommendations made was to have a more traditional setting. Participants voted on Albuquerque, New Mexico for next years conference.

Chief Thunderbird Webber is the Principal Chief of the United Cherokee Nation of Georgia. Chief Webber was born in Oklahoma of Sioux-Cherokee parents and formed the United Cherokee Nation of Georgia in 1974. He resides in Quitman, Georgia.

The United Cherokee Nation of Georgia is one of the largest non-federally recognized tribes in the U.S. It consists of 24 tribes in 32 states and Canada.

Recently at the Cherokee National Pow-Wow held in Quitman, Ga., Managing Editor, Joan McNeal spoke with Chief Webber.

The Chief discussed some of the problems American Indians face today and also helped dispel some of the myths and legends surrounding Indian culture.



R.G. Chief Thunderbird Webber of the United Cherokee Nation of Georgia — exactly what does that mean?

C.W. I am the Chief of the United Cherokee of Georgia which consists of twenty-four tribes and 32 states in Canada. We have roughly over 15,000 people in these tribes.

R.G. In order to be a member of the Cherokee nation do you have to be all Cherokee or direct descendant of a Cherokee?

C.W. You have to be at least one-sixth and be able to prove it!

R.G. How do you prove something like that?

C.W. From family records it is possible to find out. We find out by looking at the family names seeing if they are Cherokee or not. We have Cherokee records but also we adopt other Indian people into our tribes. We have Chaw-Chaws, Chicosaus, we have even adopted some Apaches. We Cherokees are a very adoptive type people and always have been.

R.G. What do you mean "adoptive type of people"?

C.W. We always adopt the best of the worst — same as the white man. The Cherokees were the most civilized tribe of all the Indian tribes. We had the first newspaper in the North America for the American Indians. We had the first alphabet. Sequoyah, a Cherokee, who fought with Andrew Jackson at Horse Shoe Bend, invented the first alphabet in the history of mankind. Also we had the first dictionary for Indians and we printed our own newspaper in Cherokee and in English. We also had our own educational books in Cherokee. When the Cherokees invaded Georgia they adopted all the Indian people here like Creeks and small Creek tribes or wiped them out. And at one time the Cherokees

were members of the Indian Confederacy in New York but we broke away in the 1740's and now the Confederacy wants to bring the Cherokees back in. The Cherokees don't want to go back in.

R.G. This is a Confederacy of all American Indians?

C.W. Of all the Iroquois Indians. The Cherokees are the southern branch of the Iroquois. We are an independent nation. We have no allegiance with the United States or Georgia and we are like the Confederacy league in New York. We have a Council of Chiefs. Our Government is the same way.

R.G. What do you do when you are not involved with the Cherokee Nation?

C.W. I am involved with the Cherokee Nation all the time but I work for an equipment company here in Quitman, but most of the time I work for the tribe. I am also a Minister and President of the Open Door Church Fellowship which is a Pentacostal Baptist movement. Cherokees are kept busy all the time. Also we have the Cherokee Nation Times — I am editor of that. That's the only Indian Newspaper in Georgia.

R.G. Is there a main Cherokee Reservation as such?

C.W. No, no more. There used to be. They had one in Cherokee, North Carolina. The one in Oklahoma they don't have. Cherokees are mainly self-supported. This is the way they want it. A lot of our people are business people.

R.G. The Cherokees are not considered a poor tribe as such?

C.W. That's a yes and no question. Most of the Cherokee people, believe it or not, are farmers. They are farm people. Even here in Georgia most of the Cherokee people are farmers. Now here in Brooks County this is

what we call a reservation country and most of the Cherokee people here are farmers and most of the Cherokee in the country are farmers but most of the Cherokee in the city do different jobs. One of our Cherokee people works for Channel 10 television, some working for BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) in different government jobs. Some are working in Indian hospitals as nurses.

R.G. Chief, let's discuss some of the myths that surround Indian culture—for example the myth that "firewater" has a strange effect on Indians.

C.W. It is true! There is something in alcohol that affects the Indians. Even if you're only one-sixth Indian, it affects you.

R.G. How does it affect Indians?

C.W. The Indian tribes are definitely against alcohol. We are very spiritual type people, and alcohol interferes with that. It interferes spiritually, mentally and physically. If an Indian drinks too much it will eventually kill him. It gives him a tendency to commit suicide—people don't believe that, but it does. We lose more young people in a year from alcohol than anything. Alcohol has killed more Indians than anything else.

R.G. Is it true that drugs were used in peace pipes?

C.W. Peace pipe is White Man's term. It doesn't come from Indians. It was a ceremony pipe. In the past, a drug similar to rabbit tobacco was used—awfully strong and smelled horrible!

R.G. Do you still have medicine men in your tribe?

C.W. Yes, we do. Ours are out West, not here in Georgia.

R.G. You have headdresses called feather bonnets and war bonnets, is there a difference?

C.W. Yes, the headbands are different on the different bonnets. The Cherokee bonnets are red, white and blue. The Warrior Chief has a red band. Now in the old days the Cher-

okee warriors and the Chief wore red, because red was the war color. The Peace Chief, he wore white or green or yellow. During the peace time the Peace Chief ruled. During the time of war the War Chief ruled.

R.G. Are most of the Cherokees today Christians?

C.W. Most of the Cherokees today are Christians—Methodist, Baptist. Most are Baptist.

R.G. In a lot of old movies you have the Indian referring to his God as the Great White Spirit.

C.W. That is the White Man's interpretation of it. The Cherokees had "Wewa". Something the same as the Jews. The old Cherokee priesthood was set up something like the Jewish priesthood. They had the Son, the Father and the Spirit. Three parts made up one great Spirit and the Eagle was the sign of the Great Spirit.

R.G. A lot of people say the Indians are second class citizens and are treated as such—How do you feel about that?

C.W. Yes, that's true. You take Arizona and New Mexico. The Indians just about run those states. Now South Dakota and North Dakota the people don't want to recognize the Indian as a citizen. They keep them downtrodden. This is where a lot of the Indian trouble comes from. People don't want to understand the Indian, Georgia is the same way.

R.G. Do you feel you are looked down upon in Georgia?

C.W. Yes and No. In certain areas you are and certain areas you are not. People watch too much TV—they think all Indians are in feathers. The Indians are like everyone else—working people. The only time you see an Indian dance is at a Pow-Wow or special ceremony but the rest of the time they are just like everybody else. A lot of times you wouldn't know an Indian if you met one. On TV the Indians are all dark but they are not as dark as you think they are because different tribes are lighter than others. The Cherokees are very light. Their red

and blue eyes are very well known. The Sioux Indians have blond hair and green eyes.

R.G. Where does the phrase "red man" come from then?

C.W. If an Indian goes into the sun, he starts tanning and turns red. The skin tone starts to get a copper red tone. All Indians are not red. In South America the Indians are almost natural red. But the North American Indians are not like that. Some are whitish and some have a yellowish tone, especially the California tribes, because they believe that back in the years a lot of Japanese and Chinese crashed their ships on the Western coast and intermarried with the Indian people. A lot of the northern tribes married with the Vikings. The Sioux have a legend of the Vikings coming in and marrying in with the Sioux people and they believe that one time there was a Viking village and it controlled the Sioux people until the Sioux revolted against it. Same way with the Canadian tribes. The Indians intermarried. They believe that at one time a bunch of Jewish people married a lot of Indians, too. So now some of the Indian customs have the Jewish flair to them. So when the missionaries started teaching the Cherokees the Old Testament, the Cherokees knew better than the missionaries.

R.G. What does the word "Cherokee" mean?

C.W. It means 'hill people' but the original name is 'Principal People'—"Cascar". The other Indians called us Cherokees because we lived in the mountains. In other words, we're hillbillies.

R.G. Do the Cherokees ever participate in scalping?

C.W. They never scalped until the English people started it. The scalping didn't come from the Indians. It came from the English, and the Spanish. For every Indian the Spanish or English killed they got paid for a scalp. The Spanish made money from their scalps. The Spanish Government paid them \$25 for a man's scalp and \$50 for a woman's scalp and something unbelievable

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...a child's scalp. That was before the English came to North America. And that's where a lot of the Indian wars came from. A lot of the Indian wars wouldn't have happened if the White Man hadn't come.

R.G. You have said you are an independent nation. Do you recognize the President of the United States?

C.W. Our tribe does not go to the Government of Georgia. We go to the President of the United States. We don't recognize anybody but the President of the United States.

R.G. If you only recognize the President of the United States, what about State laws? What about if one of you gets picked up for a speeding ticket?

C.W. We do recognize State laws and things like that. For our nation's business we go to the President of the United States because we are an independent nation.

R.G. You don't vote in any election because you don't want to vote? Or you don't vote because you aren't allowed to vote? Which is correct?

C.W. We have been citizens since 1925 and we encourage our people to vote in all the elections. We encourage our people to serve in the armed forces. We do vote as American citizens, but we still consider ourselves as an independent nation — we have signed no treaty with the U.S. Government.

R.G. How did the Cherokee Nation get started?

C.W. Back in the 1800's the Cherokees were on the British side. In the Revolutionary War we were against the Colonists. With the help of Jackson we defeated the Creeks.

...that was when the British were pushed out. At that time the Cherokee Nation really started. They formed their independent government here in Georgia — just like Washington, D.C. they had everything. The State of Georgia began to get jealous. It seems the Cherokees were living better than the white people. Cherokees had large plantations and slaves.

R.G. What sort of reform do you want for the Indians here in Georgia?

C.W. We want to get recognition here in Georgia like Cherokees should have. We should have an Indian Affairs office in Georgia like in Florida. The State Government is strictly against Indians — always has been. But we're working a little at a time to try to get in. We need an Indian Affairs office in Georgia because we have a lot of Indians here. We're working on voting one of ourselves in. We have more people today than we had yesterday. We have more people in the rain than in the sunshine. We want a State office working for Indians. We want recognition. Many people want to know our problems. We don't have any medical care here. We have to go for miles to get it. Some of our people don't have the money. Indian Hospital gives Indian people free care and we ought to have it here in Georgia. The State owes us a lot still. They got a lot of land from the Cherokees and never paid for it. We need scholarships for American Indians here in Georgia which we don't have. Schools like Georgia State University should have a scholarship fund for Indians. Florida does and North Carolina. They don't realize the Indian people are here. They say there are no Indians in Georgia. We need education, healthwise, a lot of families need help. We need jobs. Some of us are persecuted in places we go because some people are against us because we are Indians. People read too much of what we call "false truths" and watch too much TV and they don't stop to think that the Indians are easy-going people and peaceful people. The only times the Indians went to war, even in the old days was really over land and hunting rights.