

LUMBEE INDIAN DRAMA PROJECT
Notes - October 17, 1968

*For your
information,
more Poole*

I think in this project we should keep a rather small overall production picture. It might be that we could build an amphitheatre seating 700 to 900 and with a sort of long stretched stage on which permanent items of the Lumbee Indian environment and life are set up.

In the old Morality Play days the different religious scenes were often placed on wagons in successive storyline significance and these driven through the streets of a city for the populace to look at. In this way the audience as it were could remain stationary and the drama in motion. Here we will move our attention (and not our seats) from scene to scene as the storyline moves.

So perhaps I could find in the Indian country a number of architectural and social-gathering places to be erected on the, say, 175 foot stage, such as a little country store with a post office sign, a farmhouse of a cabin sort, a little church, a small school building, and so on.

Some sort of convention of separation could be set up so that when the action moved from one spot to another this token would help obliterate the preceding environment and establish the new. For example, in "Desire Under the Elms" Eugene O'Neill showed different rooms in the farmhouse. Sometime the action would be in a lower room, then this would fade out and the light come on in an upper room. This is the same principle and is old as the hills.

would

I think that one of the central items would be old Allen Lowrie's little farmhouse with its porch which is still standing. It would be well if I could select some neighborhood "spots" where good physical action and movement are, as I say, accustomed to be. This "stage" should be long enough and big enough to accommodate all sorts of manifestations of rural Indian life. It should allow for a country roadway crossing directly in front of the audience along which a horse and buggy or a galloping mule or U. S. Deputy marching his men in search of the Lowries could travel. Perhaps somewhat upstage (although there are practically no hills in Robeson County) there might be the hideaway cabin of Henry Berry and Steve Lowrie in the deep Lumbee River swamps. It might even be that along behind these fixed items there could be enough of a field to show one of our characters plowing his crop with a mule and a one-horse plow, also some of the Indian women chopping cotton there and so on. Anyway, one of the most necessary items will be the little school which in the future might foreshadow Pembroke College.

LUMBEE INDIAN DRAMA PROJECT
October 17, 1968

-2-

The material in this play as I now see it deals with the struggle of the Lumbee Indians to self-realization. And this struggle should echo and illustrate the process of free men and responsible citizenship at work in the American scene.

In a flashback, the belief on the part of the Indians that they are descended from Sir Walter Raleigh's lost colony could be exemplified.

Then too the most modern scene where the Indians rout the hooded Ku Kluxers would make for hilarity. As I mentioned before, this KKK confrontation might come in the form of a prologue.

And of course there's always music, music!

The little play I did many years ago as a student -- "The Last of the Lowries" -- suggests something of the poetic tone that I could hope would permeate the piece.

Now as to the amphitheatre -- I am bothered by the idea of placing it in the present recreation center. For one thing the winding field roads make it almost impossible for a stranger to find his way to this center. But in studying the campus of Pembroke College, I came to the conclusion that there is not enough space there for production of the drama.

This site selection is very important. On my last visit to Pembroke I felt that the site should be somewhere near the College. It might be we could get some land for this.

I think we might consider playing this ~~play~~ play only on weekends for the first year, maybe playing only Friday and Saturday nights, and consider using only local people whether of school age or of adulthood, maybe the postmaster, the local minister, a teacher, etc., on a budget of not over \$25,000.

For a finale picturizing, I'd like us to be able to display behind and somewhat above the actors a sunlit panorama of Pembroke College, this appearing as the concluding chorus and actors sing their soaring song up and out.

P.G.