

Taking Place in Our Place

Opinion Column

By Brittany Schulman, Waccamaw Siouan

Albuquerque Urban Native Complete Count Committee

We were not supposed to be here.

If you look at census records from the late 1800s to early 1900s in southeastern North Carolina, you can see many discrepancies, particularly in regard to race. Native Americans were listed as Indian on one Census, 10 years later they are listed a Mulatto and 10 years after that they are listed as Indian, again. (Mulatto is a dated term referring to a person of mixed white and black ancestry.) This happened a lot. This happened because the federal government sent a census taker, usually someone who was not a member of the community, to find out who lived where. Some census takers were thorough and went house to house; others would literally stop by a field or find a community representative to tell them where people lived. As far as the race question, sometimes they would make their own determination based on how the people looked. You have to remember this was after the Trail of Tears and Native Americans east of the Mississippi were not supposed to be here.

But we were. [Read more.](#)