

LOWRY

THE LEGEND OF HENRY BERRY LOWRY & THE SWAMP OUTLAWS OF ROBESON COUNTY



**A 10-HOUR ACTION/DRAMA
BASED ON A TRUE YET UNDER-TOLD STORY**

Logline: In the waning days of the Civil War, Native American Outlaw Henry Berry Lowry turns to guerilla warfare to rise against authority and make a better life for his family.

INTRODUCTION



Henry Lowry fends off 18 Militiamen on the Lumber River

Set in Robeson County, North Carolina, between 1864 and 1872, *Lowry* explores how far you're willing to go—and how much you're willing to risk—to fight for your rights and survival.

Lowry is a living legend on screen. With the help of our Yankee Narrator—Alexander Henderson, a journalist for the *New York Herald* who spent time amongst the Lowrys—viewers will immerse themselves in Henry's inspiring tale of rebellion.

As the Robin Hood of Robeson County, Henry's revenge-tour draws inspiration from Django from *Django Unchained* and Cullen Bohannon from AMC's *Hell on Wheels*. Like Newton Knight in *Free State of Jones*, Henry and his kin hide out in the thick Robeson swamplands, using guerilla tactics to terrorize those still loyal to the Confederate flag.

Lowry is a dark, gritty, and uncomfortable tale—one that exists somewhere between folklore and legend—that explores how racism infects, spreads and defines a culture.

“Oh, dis was a hard country, and Henry Berry Lowry's jess a payin' 'em back. He's only payin' 'em back!” - *Townsend, 1872.*



Free State of Jones
Director: Gary Ross
© 2016 STX Entertainment

THE LOST COLONY

The Lost Colony of Roanoke Island is one of the best-kept secrets in early American history. And while everyone loves a good ghost story, their fate is probably less thrilling.

In the 1880s, a local historian and legislator named Hamilton McMillan suggested that the Scuffletown Mulattoes living along the Lumber River in Robeson County, North Carolina, were descendants of the Croatan peoples, the tribe attributed with absorbing the lost Roanoke colony.

The bloodline would explain their European surnames, their Catholic beliefs, and their English-speaking tongues. And even though they talked the same, prayed the same, and dressed the same, a few shades of skin color still made them “different.”

In 1835, North Carolina ratified a new constitution that stripped non-slave blacks of their rights. This included the right to bear arms and the right to vote. The new “free persons of mixed blood” label extended far and wide.

When the Scuffletonians couldn’t prove their native ancestry, their darker skin was all the white folks needed to consider them “lesser.” As author William McKee Evans puts it, “they were more than slaves but less than free men.”



Django Unchained:
Director: Quentin Tarantino
© 2012 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc

THE LEGEND

Our story begins in December 1864, as the American Civil War rolls into its final months. Confederate conscription officers are kicking in doors, kidnapping those inside, and forcing them to work in the labor camps. Brown, black, white—it didn't matter.

To avoid conscription, HENRY BERRY LOWRY (16) and his kin hide out in the thick swamplands of Robeson County, where Confederate soldiers would never survive the night. They embark on search and rescue missions to bring their family members home from the camps and rob rich plantation owners of their crops, like Robin Hood.

But until now, the Lowrys kept their guns in their holsters. With WILLIAM LOWRY—the eldest brother—and ALLEN LOWRY—the family patriarch—at the helm, the gang only does what's necessary to survive. They'll take the white man's grain, guns, corn, and whiskey, but not his life.

Everything changes when Henry murders JAMES BARNES, their wealthy, slave-owning neighbor who threatened to send every conscription officer from Raleigh to Atlanta after the Lowrys. But Barnes is one cog in a big, bigoted machine. SHERIFF REUBEN KING, CAPTAIN RODERICK MCMILLAN—many men assume the role of “antagonist” in Henry's life.

Barnes' death sets off a chain reaction of murders, robberies, prison breaks, and guerrilla warfare as the Lowry Gang—now in Henry's hands—makes life a living hell for anyone still loyal to the Confederate flag.

Henry ditches pacifism for unhinged violence. Racist sheriffs, the Ku Klux Klan, government spies, Confederate loyalists—it doesn't matter.

To this day, nobody knows what happened to Henry Lowry once the bullets stopped flying. Some say he escaped with his own bounty; others say he died in the crossfire.

But it's the captivating tale of his life and the mystery surrounding his death that makes Henry Lowry one of the greatest legends in American history.



Hell on Wheels
Director: Phil Abraham
© 2011 Entertainment One Television

STRUCTURE

Lowry breaks into three acts:

ACT ONE (Episodes 1-3): We follow Henry's teenage years as the gang shifts from casual highway robbery to full-fledged murder. After the death of James Barnes, Henry seeks revenge on a conscription officer named Brantly Harris, who enjoys preying on young Lowry women. But killing a federal officer puts a massive target on their back. The authorities storm Allen Lowry's ranch, and Henry watches from the trees as Captain McMillan murders William and Allen in cold blood. It's all Henry's fault.

ACT TWO (Episodes 4-7): We open on a happier note—the marriage of Rhoda Strong and Henry Lowry at the family ranch. Though joy doesn't last long amongst the Lowrys, as Confederate Home Guard officers arrive and arrest Henry. Facing certain death for the murder of James Barnes, Henry must stage a daring prison break to reunite with his kin and new bride.

McMillan rallies an army of militiamen to flush the Lowrys out of the swamps. But the Outlaws are masters of guerrilla warfare and escape McMillan's patchwork army. Until now, the Lowry Gang had avoided capture and execution. Then, in 1871, Henderson Oxendine is arrested and hanged for murdering Sheriff King.

ACT THREE (Episodes 8-10): Tired of losing, McMillan decides to play dirty. He arrests the Lowry women and holds them in the jailhouse until Henry turns himself in. But the gang has other ideas and threatens violence like never before. While McMillan stands strong, the public forces him to release the Lowry women, fearing what Henry might do.

By the penultimate episode, Henry knows the end is near. He stages one final robbery in Lumberton, and the gang steals a safe containing the very bounty on Henry's head—\$22,000. Henry disappears after February 1872, shortly before our Yankee Narrator, A.B Henderson, visits Scuffletown on assignment from the New York Herald.

But one looming question remains: What happened to Henry Berry Lowry?



The Magnificent Seven
Director: Antoine Fuqua
© 2016 MGM/Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc.

LOWRY

TONE & STYLE



The Lowry gang in the Robeson swamps

Lowry is a LEGEND and will be told as such. Our Yankee Narrator will bookend each episode with background information as we move through the years, starting in 1864 and ending in 1872.

Imagine sitting around a campfire and listening to an epic tale. We won't know our Narrator's identity until the final episode, when he assumes the role of "protagonist" after Henry disappears.

At its heart, *Lowry* is a historical action/drama about a young native outlaw looking to reclaim the rights he and his people have been denied.

Set in the mid-to-late 19th century, *Lowry* will feature sets, dress, speech, and language of the period. This means uncomfortable and racially charged language and actions that Henry Berry and his kin experienced daily.

The Lowry Gang was a mix of Native Americans, free blacks, and rebellious whites. The show zooms in on each of their unique outlaw experiences in Robeson, North Carolina.



Gettysburg
Director: Ronald F. Maxwell
© 1993 Turner Pictures

HISTORICAL “NON-FICTION”

Lowry is based on the true story of Henry Berry Lowry, the Lowry Gang, and the hardships they endured under Confederate/Southern rule.

The story beats and characters are based primarily on the following works:

- *To Die Game, The Story of the Lowry Band, Indian Guerrillas of Reconstruction* - by William McKee Evans - 1971
- *The Swamp Outlaws* - by George Alfred Townsend - 1872 (A Scholar Select book in The Library of Congress).
- *The Swamp Angels* - by N.Y Herald correspondent Alexander Boyd Henderson, published in the Herald on March 26th, 1872

The events of *Lowry* are written as closely as possible to how they occurred while leaving some wiggle room for creative liberty and dramatization.

However—

Lowry will never rewrite history, only add some creative flair to craft its characters and story.

Several antagonistic forces were at play between the Confederate Home Guard, bigoted politicians, and racist sheriffs. *Lowry* will blend those historical characters into a handful of digestible antagonists for Henry and the gang to overcome.

Our story begins when some of the characters were only teenagers and follows them through their mid-20s. We can leverage hair and makeup to make our actors appear younger and older as necessary, though the door is open for de-aging CGI or multiple actors.



Lincoln
Director: Steven Spielberg
© 2012 Touchstone Pictures

THE LOWRYS

HENRY BERRY LOWRY (16-20s) was just a kid when he started robbing wealthy plantation owners with a sawed-off shotgun. Survival was his number-one priority, supplanted by revenge after the whites killed his brother and father. (William and Allen). Like Michael Corleone, Henry was thrust into a leadership position. Though, unlike Michael, it was a position he wanted.

Henry still grew into a family man, and he cherished the time he could spend with his wife, Rhoda, and their children. Meanwhile, he struck fear into the eyes of anyone who dared harm them—becoming known as the Swamp Devil of Robeson County.

STEVE LOWRY (20s) loved to sing, drink, and shoot. Think of him as the Sonny Corleone to Henry's Michael. He's a "shoot first and don't bother asking questions" kind of guy. Steve is our source of comic relief after tense and violent moments. He's always the "man with a plan," though that plan usually needs Henry's magic touch.

TOM LOWRY (20s) keeps Henry grounded, putting sense and rationality ahead of vengeful ambition. Think of him like Henry's Tom Hagen—his Consigliere. Though that doesn't mean Tom disagrees with the gang's actions, he only considers the most efficient way to rob and pillage their wealthy neighbors.



Henry Berry Lowry



Tom Lowry



The Godfather
Director: Francis Ford Coppola
© 1972 Paramount Pictures

THE STRONGS



Rhoda Strong

As depicted in *The Swamp Outlaws* - Townsend, 1872

RHODA STRONG (16-20s) is Henry's one true love, and he'll do anything to protect her. But Rhoda rarely needs protection. She's sharp as a sugar cane and knows how to use her natural beauty to get what she wants. She'll grow up to be the Queen of Scuffletown, and even the most bigoted, pro-KKK writers in North Carolina would describe her as having "a really pretty face which is, by the way, almost white."

BOSS STRONG (14-20s) is Rhoda's brother and Henry's best friend. They're like two shells in a shotgun and share a similar vision for a carefree future—raising their children on their own farms, eating pork they didn't have to steal. Boss keeps Henry sharp—competitive even—ensuring he's the deadliest man with a Spencer rifle.

ANDREW STRONG (20s) is the eldest Strong and a valuable informant for the Lowry gang. People like Andrew—those with close ties to the Lowrys without direct involvement—"kept the band informed of every move the militia made." Andrew, though, teetered on the fence between joining the gang and remaining an "upstanding citizen." In the end, he realized his "mixed blood" would never afford him the latter.



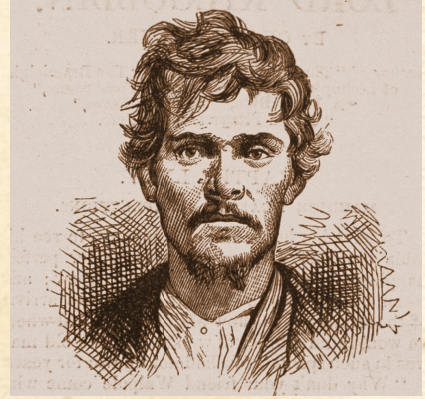
Westworld
Director: Jonathan Nolan
© 2016 HBO Entertainment

THE OXENDINES & APPLEWHITE

CALVIN & HENDERSON OXENDINE

(20s) were inseparable until Henderson was hanged for his involvement with the Lowry band. In fact, Henderson Oxendine is the only outlaw to ever be tried and executed during the Lowry War. Both played crucial roles as foot soldiers for the Lowry gang and were first cousins to Henry and his kin.

GEORGE APPLEWHITE (20s) is a former slave, a skilled mason, and a valuable gun in Henry's gang. He was shot and wounded multiple times during his tenure with the Lowrys but always got back up. In fact, Applewhite is the only Outlaw to survive in the end—assuming the stories of Henry's death were true.



Calvin Oxendine



Henderson Oxendine



George Applewhite



The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of
the Ring
Director: Peter Jackson
© 2001 New Line Cinema

THE HOME GUARD & THE KKK

RODERICK MCMILLAN (40s) is the Lowry's—and any non-white's—main antagonist. From his early days as a Captain in the Confederate army to becoming Sheriff of Robeson County, McMillan was willing to play extra dirty to bring the Lowrys to “justice.” McMillan often found himself in the middle of political tension concerning what to do about the Lowrys. He'd just have to make his own decisions—which were often the cruelest.

SHERIFF REUBEN KING (40s) was Sheriff for several years until he retired and was replaced by McMillan. He didn't make life easy for the Lowrys, though he didn't make life easy for anyone he didn't like in Robeson County. Free blacks, Native Americans, debtors—King ruled with a cruel fist, which made his death at the end of George Applewhite's gun even sweeter.

THE KU KLUX KLAN acted as a looming antagonistic entity. Anybody with anti-Lowry sentiment had suspected Klan ties. They controlled the *Wilmington Journal* and would call for more aggressive action against the Lowrys. Prominent members were present at William and Allen's murder, and they terrorized every non-white in and around Robeson County.



Deadwood: The Movie
Director: Daniel Minahan
© 2019 HBO Films

THE WRITER



Tesla
Director: Michael Almereyda
© 2020 Passage Pictures

ALEXANDER BOYD HENDERSON (30s) is the only journalist to spend time amongst the Lowrys. Though he never got to speak with the Outlaw King himself, Henderson did spend time with Rhoda, Andrew, Steve, and Tom, who served as primary sources for his N.Y Herald exposé. Before Alexander, most papers painted the Lowrys as a band of ruthless Outlaws meant to be feared rather than respected. Alexander went into the experience fearing for his life but left with a new-found appreciation for Henry Berry Lowry and his kin.

THE “END”



Lowry descendants fend off the KKK in 1958

What happened to Henry Berry after 1872 remains a mystery. Some sources say he accidentally shot himself with his own shotgun. Others say he escaped out west and joined the army.

Rhoda maintained that Henry was still alive until she died in the early 20th century, and Lumbee tradition abides by her beliefs—as do we. Whatever the case, his story and blood flowed through several generations, culminating in January 1958 at a Ku Klux Klan rally in Robeson County.

Once the curtains close on 1872, *Lowry* flashes forward to January 13th, 1958, when the KKK began burning crosses on the lawns of Native Americans who were moving into all-white neighborhoods in Robeson County. On the 18th, the Klan held a rally near Maxton, North Carolina (formally Shoe Heel).

About 100 Klansmen gathered around a truck as Grand Wizard James Cole addressed the crowd. It was dark that evening, with only a single bulb providing enough light. Little did they know that 2500 Lowry, Strong, and Oxendine descendants were surrounding them in the darkness.

A sharpshooter shot out the bulb, and Henry Berry’s young kinsmen raised and fired their guns into the air. All hell broke loose as the Lowrys chased the Klan out of town—never to return again.

A *Robesonian* reporter called it “the shortest Ku Klux Klan rally in history.”