

# Southeastern Kentucky Melungeon Information Exchange Fall /Winter 1995

---

---

## Getting Started

Most of you have written me in response to a note in the Clay County Ancestral News about the idea of forming a Southeastern Kentucky Melungeon Information Exchange. I'm sure some of you had given up on me as far as this project was concerned but I wanted to wait until I had a few responses from the newsletter notice and could get a better idea of how many people might be interested in something like this.

Perhaps the best place to begin is with my own interest in this subject. I think that for me, the starting point was about three years ago when I went to hear Brent Kennedy speak at the University of Tennessee on his family research and his relationship to the Melungeons. I mostly went out of curiosity. I grew up in Leslie County, Kentucky and I had, as a kid, heard my Dad and others talk about Melungeons. At that time, however, I was never even sure if what they were talking about was true or just another story. Later on I found out that the Melungeons were real and read Jean Patterson Bible's "The Melungeons Yesterday and Today". I noticed that some of the surnames in this book, specifically, Mullins and Bowling were ones in my lineage but I figured they were other Mullins and Bowlings....Melungeon ones while mine were English/Scotch-Irish with that Bowling dash of Pocahontas. Then I heard Brent Kennedy.

He talked about Melungeon families hiding the heritage and of Free Persons of Color Laws that were used to take their land and bar them from the courts and schools. He talked about family stories of being Black Dutch, of being Cherokee, of families that seemed to just show up somewhere with no past. And he mentioned several surnames that stunned me...Hall, Osborne, Sizemore, Adams, even Fields, along with the ones I knew, Bowling, Collins, Mullins and Goins. But he was mostly talking about East Tennessee, and Southwestern Virginia so I thought maybe these were some other Halls, Osbornes, Sizemores and so on. Just to make sure, I asked him if there was any evidence that these families had links to Kentucky and found out that Southeastern Kentucky was as much "Melungeon Country" as were Tennessee and Virginia. And I was hooked. Because my Hall family had a story of a child born on the ship from England and seemed to be nowhere before they were in southwestern Virginia. Because I have two Sizemore lines, one George All Sizemore and Aggy Shepherd with their Cherokee captive story that I could never believe and another, from "Old Ned" Sizemore in North Carolina who claimed to be Cherokee. Two thousand of his descendants applied for land based on that claim and not one could prove it. But if you read those claims, you see that there was something there, a family with some tradition of being Native American and physical descriptions that sound a lot like the Melungeons. I even started to wonder about my ancestor John Fields who fought in the Revolution and is the common ancestor of a large part of the southeast Kentucky Fiels family. I had not (and have yet t) find any documentation of his parents. He was from Tennessee and there are about 15 or 20 years, during which he married a woman named Polly and started his family that I didn't know where he was. And there were those Mullins and Bowlings.

So I wrote Brent Kennedy and eventually talked to him on the phone. He could, right away, tie my Mullins line to Melungeons. Suddenly I was one of them. But I suspected I was a lot more tied than that. In the last couple of years I have not proven any connection. I doubt in many cases I ever will. These people were not out to advertise the fact that they were Melungeon, rather they were trying their best to hide it. But I now know that there was a John Fields and a George Sizemore in the area that is now Hancock Co.Tennessee, which was and is a known Melungeon population center, just before my John and George show up in Kentucky. And I know that some of the surname research shows that there are more potential Melungeons in southeastern Kentucky than in Tennessee or Virginia or North Carolina. And

I look at old photos of my grandparents and great grandparents in a new light. When I look at the piles of family history research I have collected over the years, I ask a different set of questions. I expect that my sisters and I tie to some Melungeon ancestor through all four of our grandparents, Corneilus T. Fields, Laura Belle Hart, Marion Estridge Adams and Mary E. Morgan. Most of these families had been in what is now Leslie county since about 1800. (The Harts were the last to arrive, coming from Ashe County, North Carolina between 1850-60). If our family had those ties, I thought, then so must a lot of other Southeastern Kentucky families. That is how the idea for this exchange got started.

It seems clear to me that there *are* Melungeon roots in many southeastern Kentucky families. I think that the best way to find and try and document those is to get as many people talking about it as possible. What I envision here is a three or four times a year mailing to update everyone and to include new people.....kind of a chain letter you want to get. At least for now and as long as I have time and resources, I will try and retype the letters I get and add one of my own with anything of interest I have come across (I hesitate to use the term "newsletter" because that implies a greater commitment of time energy and resources than I think I can take on) I'll also keep a list of addresses for people who have been interested or who have written and update that each time. We can then use that mailing as a reminder for each of us to gather anything we've come across and send copies to everyone on the list. I would not expect that everybody would always have something to send but if anyone comes across something that may be of interest to others or can answer some question, send it out to the list. In this way, everyone can be involved and we can spread the copying and mailing cost around. If I sound unclear and confused it is because I am. I've never tried something like this and would welcome ideas from anybody as to how it would work better.

I would like to see us focus on Southeastern Kentucky families but I know that there are really two things that happen when you get hooked on this research. You want to find your own family ties and you want to know more about Melungeons in general...who they were and their history. Some of the new thinking and research in that area is very exciting and I don't want to exclude that. This may be very ambitious but I hope we can look at both the broad history and at the same time, start to establish the Melungeon ties to many of our own southeast Kentucky families. It all may fall flat but at least it was worth a shot.

So, with that said, lets get on with this and see how it goes.....

Bill Fields

## *SO, WHAT IS A MELUNGEON ANYWAY??*

We should probably begin with a general overview if who the Melungeons are. Melungeons are a group of dark-featured people who have lived in Appalachia for at least 200 years and probably longer. They are not, at least exclusively, Native Americans, not African American and not the "usual" Caucasian (read: Scott Irish/German) Appalachians. They were reported to have been here when the first "white" settlers came and were living in cabins, speaking broken Elizabethan English and saying they were "Portygree". Right now, the term Melungeon seems to be most strongly associated with the area around Hancock Co. Tennessee but there are Melungeons and their descendants all over the region, east Tennessee, southeastern Kentucky, western Virginia and western North Carolina. While their darker, rather Mediterranean features once set them apart, inter--marriages have taken place over the years and the "look" is probably not as apparent in many families.

Melungeons have over time gotten a lot of media attention but it has not always been good or useful. The media it seems has always liked to tell things the way they want and Melungeons often come off as a folk tale---another Appalachian mystery---but they are a real people, just one with a lost history. There are lots of theories as to where the Melungeons came from. One is that they descend from the Lost Colony of Roanoke who intermarried with local Native American populations. Another says they are the descendants of the Welsh explorer, Madoc who came to North America around 1100 with ten ships filled with colonists. Some believe that they were the descendants of shipwrecked Portuguese sailors. Still others suggest that Melungeons are the lost tribe of Israel, lost Spanish explorers, or simply "tri-racial isolates",

meaning a Native American/ African American/ Caucasian mixture which continued intermarrying.

Personally, I lean very heavily to the theory put forth by Dr. N. Brent Kennedy in his book, "The Melungeons, the Resurrection of a Proud People, A Story of Ethnic Cleansing in America" (Mercer University Press 1994). Dr. Kennedy suggests that the Melungeons were stating fact when they said they were "Portyghee". He suggests that Portuguese/Moorish people who were being increasingly attacked during the Spanish Inquisition were a large part of the settlers Spain brought to North America in the 1500s. He has good evidence that these people were, in various ways, abandoned or fled the settlements and that they then intermarried with the local Native Americans. These people then migrated westward in front of the larger settlements and, on the way may have continued to intermarry with other groups including possibly escaped slaves, and English or English/Native American mixed people. This is all a very sketchy overview: I really suggest reading the book, it's fascinating!

Later when their "white" neighbors caught up with them--and this is the real tragedy of these folks-- the census designation of "Free person of Color" (FPC) and laws associated with it were used to deprive Melungeons of basic legal rights including the right to own land, vote, use the court system and have their children educated. Being Melungeon was not the best way to get ahead at the time and so many people hid their ancestry with other "covers" that could account for their dark features, claiming to be "Black Dutch", "Black Irish" or to have Native American ancestry. These folks generally were not that different in appearance from their white neighbors and succeed in "passing", especially if they moved to a new area, like say, from TN to KY. (Interestingly, at one point in time, lots of Melungeons from VA came across to KY to get married as the VA laws were much more restrictive toward "inter-racial" marriages.) As the Melungeon families were able to hide their ethnic identity, the heritage was lost from the family tradition. Often, because the history was lost or hidden, it is only by surname, vague traditions and "facts" that don't check out that one can make connections back to Melungeons. Over time, with cross marriages the physical traits are less apparent. There are folks of Melungeon descent with fair skin and blond hair. But there are things you can look for. One is "shovel teeth" a curving of the inner surface of the front teeth in a shovel shape. It's a trait common to Native Americans and shows up in many Melungeons. There are also several genetic diseases that are particular to north Africans and Mediterranean that have shown up in people from Appalachia. It was such a diagnosis that set Dr. Kennedy off on his search.

If you suspect a family might be Melungeon, look closely at census designations, not just for the direct ancestor but for siblings, aunts and uncles. Families and even individuals would change from FPC, to white, to Mulatto, to Indian and back again at the whim of census takers. Check if there is a tradition of being Black Dutch, Black Irish or very often in my Kentucky Melungeon families, Cherokee. For that reason it can be useful to look at the Cherokee By Blood collection for rejected Cherokee land claim applications. And look for families that seem to have no history or one that just does not seem to "fit". None of these things alone means that a family is/was Melungeon but several taken together may be good evidence. In many cases, there is no absolute proof. Folks were hiding their history to protect themselves and increase the chances for their kids to have a easier life; they often did a good job of it.

There are several other groups of people similar to the Melungeons....Lumbee, Carmel Indians, Turks, Brass Ankles Wesorts, Jackson Whites and Redbones to name a few. And I have heard the term "Ramps" used interchangeably with Melungeon. I think that all these people are all of a common history and probably have a number of connections.

When it comes to that history, I believe that the central problem with a lot of research in this area is that people are trying to come up with *the* answer to the origins of every one of the many long standing mixed-ethnic groups in the country. And I don't think that answer exists. Or if it does, it is certainly not as simple as saying that they are all "tri-racial isolates" and leaving it at that. My personal distaste for that term aside, I think that the origins and answers are varied and complex. I think everyone would agree that you can define these groups fairly easily...Melungeons are dark-featured people from Appalachia who have lived in the region for at least 200 years. The problem comes when you try and get a similar simple definition for the origins.

By and large, I agree with Brent Kennedy's theories. They make sense to me. But I think there were a lot of things going on in the early years of European settlement. I believe that the refugees from Santa Elena, one of the early Spanish colonies, and soldiers and their families from, Juan Pardo's forts make up the first core of the Melungeons. I think that some of the genetic evidence is also pretty strong that the story that Sir Francis Drake left captives including Turks,

## Africans and South

American Native Americans on Roanoke Island is probably accurate and that they form the second core. I'm not sure to what degree we can say that the two groups joined but I think it is likely that they had some contact. Just as I think it is likely that they both intermarried with Native Americans. But I think we have to be careful in assuming that it was always a matter of Native people coming to live among the Melungeons (using that term now to talk about both core groups). I think it is equally possible and equally likely that members of these groups would have been integrated into Native American groups as well. So early on, you have Melungeon groups with Native members but also Native groups with Melungeon members. And people being what they are, you quickly have mixed children in both groups...which would have probably taken on the identity of whoever they grew up with. Assuming the two cores I mentioned earlier, you would now have people that included Portuguese Moors, Turks, South American Native people, West Africans, North American Native people and Spanish in varying degrees of mixed and non-mixed people. And you could also have, among the Native Americans in the region, any possible combinations of these folks being assimilated into the tribes. So you have these fairly large groups that would have been capable of maintaining a cultural link back to their origins...whatever those might be.

At the same time, or a little later, there were probably other smaller pockets. The Lost Colony is, I believe one. I don't think they account for the origins of the Melungeons but rather are an example of another early mixed group. Best explanation I've seen is that the colony split very soon after arrival and that the bulk of the settlers went off the island and settled on the mainland where they survived for several years, again perhaps with intermarriages with the local people. Then, shortly before Jamestown, they were attacked and mostly killed by Powhatan, Pocahontas's father. Some few, however survived and the Jamestown people were told that they were living among Native People. Again, another source for mixed genes. Probably only a few people relative to the size of the two core groups but still, mixed-race children, this time Native American/English, very early on. And there were probably many other incidents before and after up and down the coast. I certainly doubt that Pocahontas's son, Thomas Rolfe was the first mixed child born in North America!

As settlement from Europe increased, there was a pushing back of the Native people from the coast inland at which time they probably came into closer contact with the Melungeon core groups. And the introduction of African slaves added another component to the potential mixing. I've read some interesting arguments that early on, the idea of race was very different and as a result, the first Africans were treated as indentured servants. But very quickly, within 50 years there was a shift in the concept of race that allowed Africans and their children as well to be forever indentured.....slavery. In any case, there were certainly mixed race African/European children born and probably African/Native American as well. But very quickly, as the North American system of slavery developed there was a social division between the free blacks and mixed race people and the whites. Just as there was a social stigma to being mixed race Native/European. That stigma would have made it desirable for these people to get away from the developing European societies on the coast....and the only direction to do that was west, to the fringes of the settlement. And as the settlement moved, so would they have. And along the way, encountering and intermingling with the displaced Native people and the Melungeon core group/groups. And learning early on to de-emphasize their mixed heritage with white people and probably passing that along to others. So that when the core groups encountered the English, they called themselves by a Afro-Portuguese term meaning white person..."Mulango". With, as Brent Kennedy discovered, the final vowel pronounced "zhun".

Thus you have people physically and socially on the fringes of the emerging Euro-American society who get pushed west until the migration by the Anglos is so large that they get "discovered". That's why I like the term "Fringe Folks" to refer to all these groups. Seems to me that the early Melungeon/Lumbee/Turk/Guinea groups were probably part of the Pardo/Santa Elena core group because they started out just about where Pardo left people. The Santa Elena people would have had knowledge of this and would have known that was a place to go to escape the English. The fact that some of the Melungeons in Tennessee have roots in NC is sometimes used to say that they were not Portuguese... just "tri-racial isolates". Seems to me that it underscores that they probably were descendants of Pardo/Santa Elena. And that they were pushed westward into land that Pardo, and the soldiers with him, had visited.

Because of geography, I suspect Brass Ankles and Redbones may have been more related to the Drake core. I have not really read enough about either of them to know but that would seem to make sense to me. Carmel Indians I believe trace their roots to the southeastern Kentucky Melungeon groups.

Anyway, once "discovered" the Free Persons of Color laws and the resulting discrimination would have been the main factors in influencing how the groups developed. At this point, I really think Brent Kennedy has been great in explaining the "passing" and the loss of history and heritage. I just wonder if even he was/is aware of the degree to which "passing" Melungeons have left their genes in Appalachia and beyond. (Some Melungeons surely went west along with the general migration.) There is certainly a stereotype that we herein Appalachia are all inbred. I don't care much for that but I've done family research in this area and I know that most families are interconnected. And it makes sense that in stable communities that have existed for 200 years, you end up with close ties. And four or five Melungeon families in the early 1800s have, by now, had genetic input into most of us. I think most people who have researched Southeastern Kentucky families know that there are some people which pretty much everyone is going to eventually going to tie into somehow. If, for example, I am correct in my thinking that George All Sizemore and/or Aggy Shepherd were Melungeons, at this point, how many people are descended from them? And all of those would be of Melungeon heritage.

I think this whole search for the origins of these groups has importance beyond genealogy. It is part of the history and the culture of Appalachia in a much more profound way than just an interesting "mystery". To understand this all is to have to redefine the assumptions about the ethnic heritage of Appalachians. Just one very practical and important example. We know, there are genetic diseases and conditions associated with folks of Melungeon descent that are not expected in "Scotch-Irish" Appalachians. And healthcare people in the region need to know that and to be informed as to what to watch for. We all need to know that the explanation of who we are, as a region is not as simple as isolated Scotch-Irish with a dab of Cherokee.



## *Read More About It*

### *a source list*

One of the things I have found difficult is knowing where to look for any information on Melungeons. The following list is not complete but it is a good start. The bulk was put together by a man named Robert L. Smith who was good enough to let me use it. I've added some to his original listing

L. F. Addington, "Mountain Melungeons Let the World Go By", *Sunday Sun* -- Baltimore, July 29, 1945

James Aswell, "Lost Tribes of Tennessee's Mountains", *Nashville Banner*, August 22, 1937

Bonnie Ball, *The Melungeons*, 5th edition 1975. HCPL has a copy.

Bonnie Ball, "The Melungeons", *Historical Sketches by Historical Society of Southwest Virginia*, No. 2, 1966

Bonnie Ball, "America's Mysterious Race", *Read*, vol. 16 (May, 1944), 64-67

Bonnie Ball, "Mystery Men of the Mountains", *Negro Digest*, 3, Jan 1945, 39-41

Bonnie Ball, "Virginia's Mystery Race", *Virginia State Highway Bulletin* 2, No. 6, Apr 1945, 2-3

Bonnie Ball, "Who are the Melungeons?", *Southern Literary Messenger*, 3, No. 2 (June 1945), 5-7

Phyllis Cox Barr, "The Melungeons of Newman's Ridge". Graduate thesis presented to the Department of English Faculty, East Tennessee State University, 1965.

Brewton Berry, *Almost White* (New York: Macmillan, 1963)

Jean Patterson Bible, *The Melungeons, Yesterday and Today*, 1975, printed by East Tennessee Printing Company, Rogersville, Tennessee.

Jean Bible, "A People With an Unknown Past", *Baltimore Sunday Sun Magazine*, June 13, 1971

Swan M. Burnett, "A Note on the Melungeons", *American Anthropologist* 2 (October 1889), 347

Paul D. Converse, "The Melungeons", , Dec 1912, 59-69

Louise Davis, "The Mystery of the Melungeons", *Nashville Tennessean Sunday Magazine*, September 22, 1963

Louise Davis, "Are They Vanishing?", *Nashville Tennessean Sunday Magazine*, September 29, 1963

Virginia Easley DeMarce, "Looking at Legends - Lumbee and Melungeon", *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* Vol I, #1, Mar 1993

Virginia Easley DeMarce, "Verry Slitly Mixt": Tri-Racial Isolate Families of the Upper South - A Genealogical Study", Vol 80, #1, Mar 1992, *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* -- not as much information on the Melungeons as the first article

*East Tennessee Historical Society Bulletin*, No. 32, 1960

John Fetterman, "The Melungeons", *Louisville Courier-Journal Magazine*, March 30, 1969

John Fetterman, "The Mystery of Newman's Ridge", *Life Magazine*, June 26, 1970. Not in all editions.

Gowen Research Foundation, 5708 Gary Ave., Lubbock, TX 79413, phone (806) 795-8758. Chief interest is family of Gowen/Going/Goin, etc. which apparently includes Melungeon lines. Membership is \$12.50.

William Paul Grohse papers (Microfilm #501), Tennessee State Library and Archives. Melungeon family data collected by Grohse prior to 1989.

William Grohse, "The Land of Mystery", *Hancock County Post*, July 2, 1970

W. T. Hale and D. L. Merritt, *A History of Tennessee and the Tennesseans*, 2vols, Chicago 1913, Vol 1, Chapter 16 -- The Melungeons of E. Tennessee, 179-196

Mildred Haun, *The Hawk's Done Gone*, New York 1940

Herberman, Maryann, The Melungeon Mystique, *Mountaineer Times*, Vol 9 No. 2, Early Fall 1994

Judge, Joseph, Between Columbus and Jamestown, Exploring Our Forgotten Century, *National Geographic*, Vol. 173, No. 3, March 1988

N. Brent Kennedy, *The Melungeons: The Resurrection of a Proud People*, Mercer University Press, GA 1994. To order call (800) 342-0841, ext 2880. Price is \$16.99. Now in the second printing.

Brent Kennedy, "The Melungeon Mystery Solved: Unraveling a Family's Heritage", *Blue Ridge Country* (July - August 1992), 16-19

W. S. Pollitzer and W. H. Brown, "Survey of Demography, Anthropometry, and Genetics in the Melungeons of Tennessee: An Isolate of Hybrid Origin in Process of Dissolution", *Human Biology* 41 (September 1969), 388-400

William S. Pollitzer, "The Physical Anthropology and Genetics of Marginal People of the Southeastern United States", *American Anthropologist* 74 (June 1972), 719-34

Edward T. Price, Jr., "Mixed-Blood Populations of Eastern United States as to Origins, Localizations, and

Persistence", Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1950

Edward T. Price, "The Melungeons: A Mixed-Blood Strain of the Southern Appalachians", *The Geographical Review*, vol. 41, No. 2, Apr 1951

Henry R. Price, "Melungeons: The Vanishing Colony of Newman's Ridge", paper presented March 1966, American Studies Association of Kentucky and Tennessee, Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville. Reissued and published by the Hancock County Drama Association.

Bill Rawlins, "East Tennessee Melungeons Have Past Clouded in Myth", *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, October 10, 1958

Lewis Shepard, *Personal Memoirs of Lewis Shepard, L.L.M.* (Chattanooga: Privately printed, 1915), 82-90

Jesse Stuart, *Daughter of the Legend*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965. This is a novel dealing with the Melungeons.

O. N. Walraven, "The Melungeons of Oakdale", Manuscript G.08 from WPA Federal Writers' Guide, in McClung Historical Collection, Lawson McGhee Library, Knoxville

Joel Williamson, *The New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States*, New York: Free Press, 1980

Thomas Zachary, "The Melungeons", Undergraduate thesis, Department of Education, University of Tennessee

Leo Zuber, "The Melungeons", Typewritten Manuscript #G.08, W.P.A. Federal Writers' Guide, McClung Historical Collection, Lawson-McGhee Library, Knoxville, Tennessee

*Hancock County, Tennessee, and Its People, 1844-1989*, Marceline, Missouri: Walworth Publishing Co., 1990?

The Kentucky Historical Society has a folder of clippings on the Melungeons as does the McClung collection in Knoxville.



## Surnames

*The following are the Melungeon-related surnames (NC, VA, TN, KY) from Brent Kennedy's book, "The Melungeons, the Resurrection of a Proud People, A Story of Ethnic Cleansing in America". (Mercer University Press). A word of caution with surnames though, Having one of the following does not necessarily mean that an ancestor was Melungeon, just like not having one does not mean that he or she was not.*

**Adams, Adkins, Barker, Barns, Beckler, Bell, Bennett, Berry, Biggs, Bolen/Bowlin/Bowling, Bowman, Branham, Brogan, Bullion, Burton, Byrd, Campbell, Carrico, Carter, Casteel, Caudill, Chavis, Clark, Coal, Coffey, Cole, Coleman, Coles, Colley, Collier, Collins, Collinsworth, Colyer, Counts, Cox, Coxe, Cumba, Cumbo, Cumbow, Curry, Davis, Dorton, Dye, Ely, Evans, Fields, Freeman, French, Gann, Garland,**

**Gibson, Gipson, Goins, Goings, Gorvens, Gowan, Graham, Gwinn, Hall, Hammond, Hendrix, Hill, Hillman, Hopkins, Jackson, Keith, Kennedy, Kiser, Lawson, Lopes, Lucas, Maggard, Maloney, Martin, Miner, Minor, Mizer, Moore, Morley, Mullins, Nash Niccans, Noel, Orr, Osborne, Perry, Phipps, Polly, Powers, Pruitt, Ramey, Rasnick, Reaves, Reeves, Roberson, Robertson, Sexton, Shephard, Short, Sizemore, Stallard, Stanley, Steel, Swindall, Tolliver, Turner, Vanover, Watts, White, Whited, Williams, Willis, Wright and Wyatt.**

*In addition, from "Verry Slitly Mixt: Tri-Racial Isolate Families of the Upper South- A Genealogical Study" by Virginia Easley DeMarce, National Genealogical Quarterly Vol. 80, No. 1 March 1992. comes the following:*

**Bean, Bunch, Delp, Denham, Goodman, Hale, Locus, Locust, Mize, Mosley, Nicholas, Pinore, Pinion, Sweat, Sweats, Sweet, and Swett.**

---

---



## Letters

**Dianne Stark Thurman :**

*Recently I was reading a copy of your local Clay Co. Ancestral News and ran across the articles on the Melungeons*

*I come from an old Melungeon family in Claiborne County, Tennessee. Thomas Goin and his sons were proven "mixed blood" in the enclosed 1853 case tried in Claiborne Co.*

*There is a "Gowen Research Foundation" of which there is a separate research group on the Melungeons/ When we had our meeting in Houston Texas in 1994, Brent Kennedy was one of the speakers.*

*You may wish to contact Arlee Gowen, President, at 5708 Gray Ave. Lubblock, TX 79413, about material for your research on the Melungeons in Kentucky.*

>>>>>\*<<<<<<

**Jerry Senters:**

*Your article in the Clay Co. Ancestral News about Melungeons I found interesting.*

*I trace my g.g.g. grandmother to the 1850 Clay census. She was reported living with a freed black man George Freeman. That may be. But the phrase "Black Dutch" I first heard about 6 years ago from an aunt who said my g. grandfather once said the reason he was so dark was that he was "Black Dutch"*

*Would the name Freeman be on the list as a Melungeon name?*

>>>>>\*<<<<<<

**Phillip E. Roberts:**

*I am of Melungeon descent on my paternal side. He was born on Newman's Ridge, Hancock Co. Tennessee. His mother and grandmother were both Collins.*

*Please let me know more about your Melungeon exchange. I am very interested.*

*Thanks*

>>>>>\*<<<<<<

**Delores J. Knowles:**

*I read with interest your articles on the Melungeons in the latest issue of the Clay Co. KY Ancestral News. Recently, I have been considering the possibility of Melungeon ancestry.*

*Like many families with southeast origins, it was always said that there was a "a Cherokee grandmother" back on my maternal Burns line. Certainly my grandfather, Willie D. Burns, born 1879 in Gilmer County, WV, had the classic native American features -- high cheekbones, dark eyes and hair and a swarthy complexion. As a child I never questioned the story of Indian ancestry. When genealogy became my passion, I could find no evidence of a Cherokee grandmother. There are, however, three large question mark concerning the origins of grandmothers in this line. These involve the Burns, Collins, and Bowling lines that at one time were in Clay County.*

*My gggggrandfather, William Burns, b. ca 1756 probably in what is now Henry Co., VA, served in the Revolutionary War in the TN valley region and NC. After the war he remained in NC for a time before migrating to Clay C., KY ca 1800 with some of his sons including his son Andrew through whom I descend. Andrew and his older children apparently were born to an unknown*

wife that William met and married in NC and who died while still young. I have found no trace whatsoever as to who this wife was. This is my first question mark.

Andrew married in 1822 in Clay Co., KY, Nancy Baker, daughter of Julius Robert Baker, granddaughter of Jon Renty Baker whose mother was reportedly by all family traditions, named Mary "Mollie" Bowling b. ca. 1700 who married Andrew Baker probably in NC. Andrew Baker had migrated from VA into NC and it is unclear as to whether he married Mollie before leaving VA or after reaching NC. Their son John Renty was known to have lived with an Indian wife (not my ancestress) for several years by whom he had several children. If Mollie was indeed a Bowling (she did name a son Bowling) it is a mystery as to where she fits in the Bowling line. That is my second question mark.

Andrew Burns's son, Hugh born in Clay Co. in 1825, married as his second wife Eliza (also in some records Mary Elizabeth) Collins born ca 1835 in KY. It is believed that Eliza's father was an Archibald Collins b. ca 1800. He was a bondsman for her marriage in Clay CO. and when Hugh and Eliza migrated to Gilmer County, WV around 1849 they appear to have traveled with the family of Archibald Collins with whom they lived for a time there. Hugh and Eliza named a son William Archibald. I have not been able to link Archibald Collins with any other Collins family. In reading an undocumented family history written by another descendent of Hugh and Eliza, the writer said it was a family tradition that grandmother Eliza was "part Indian." This is my third question mark.

It is these three question marks in my maternal Burns line that suggest I should at least explore the possibility of a Melungeon connection. I would be interested in becoming a part of any network of research effort in this area.



### **Patrica A. Hopkins Baldwin**

*I would like to request more information on your: Southeast Kentucky Melungeon Ancestry Information Exchange. I have been researching my ancestry for quite some time and do have Melungeon as well as Cherokee heritage. It has been no easy feat to research this ethnic diversity of backgrounds.*

*My maiden name is; Hopkins. I have read Mr. Kennedy's book and find it to be very helpful and a fascinating read. His mother was a Hopkins by birth and distantly related to my paternal Hopkins line. So I am very interested in Melungeon Ancestry Information Exchange. Please send me more info. Thank you.*



## The Mailing List

---

If you are on this list and don't want to be let me know and I'll take your name off. And if you know someone who would like to be, have them drop me a letter and I'll add them to the next mailing.

*Note: The mailing list was removed for this on-line version*



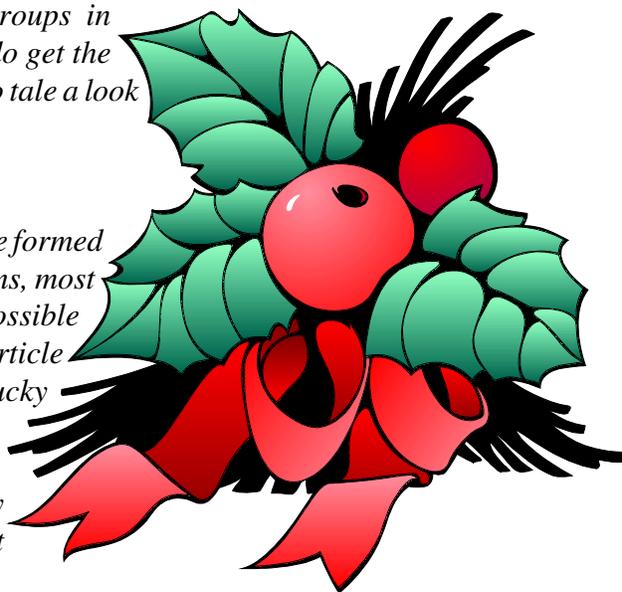
## Some Final Thoughts

*I don't know if this is what you folks expected. It's not really what I first thought of either but it's what I ended up with when I was done! What I would really like to see is an effort to gather, and to the extent we can, document early Melungeon settlers in Southeastern Kentucky. Depending on the response I'll try and get another one out in the spring sometime. I would appreciate your input and ideas. For example, I wondered about a Queries section. The thing about that would be that I would want to figure a way so that everyone could see the answers as well as the question. I do hope that if anybody has something that would be of help to the rest of the group they will follow up by sending it to the list. This is the part I see as really useful because it gets information circulating and helps everyone build up a collection of sources and resources. Basically, I guess I have a real fear that this may become a newsletter and I do know my limits!*

*I have a couple of general questions that someone may be able to answer. You may or may not know about the arched windows and doors in many old Melungeon houses, including log structures. And the grave houses built over many Melungeon graves. Does anyone know of either of those showing up in Kentucky anywhere? There was a grave house in the Singleton Cemetary on Camp Creek in Leslie County when I was a kid but it's gone now. I don't know if it has any connections to Melungeons or not. The other question concerns genetic conditions that appear in Melungeon families. I wonder if anyone else knows more about these and/or has had any instances of them in their families.*

*If any of you have access to the Internet or any of the on-line computer services, there are sometimes postings about Melungeons on the alt. Appalachia newsgroup and on the KYROOTS mailing list. And if you use or have access to CompuServe, there is a long standing discussion of Melungeons, Black Dutch, Lumbees and the mixed-race groups in general on the geneology forum there. I really do get the feeling that more and more people are starting to take a look at the possibilities of Melungeon heritage.*

*As far as I know, Melungeon Research Committee formed by Brent Kennedy continues to function and seems, most recently, to have been focusing on the possible Melungeon links to Turkey. There was an article recently (Nov. 12) in the Louisville, Kentucky Courier-Journal that talked about the links between the Melungeons and Turkey. And the latest that I have heard is that the documentary on the Melungeons should be out sometime next year.*



*Happy Holidays to Everyone!*