

# Southeastern Kentucky Melungeon Information Exchange

Volume 1

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## *welcome to issue #3 of the southeastern kentucky melungeon information exchange!*

Although it has taken a bit longer than I had planned, I think you will find that this issue was worth the wait! There is some great material. In fact, I had so much that I had to make some decisions as to what to print this time and what to hold on to for a later issue.

The first bit of news is that the address for the Exchange has changed. It now has it's own address: **P.O. Box 342 Alcoa, Tennessee 37701**. Please send comments, queries or whatever to this address.

For those of you joining us with this issue, the Southeastern Kentucky Melungeon Information Exchange grew out of an idea that many people in Kentucky, whether they know it or not, have Melungeon ancestry. It seemed that the best way to find and document those ancestors was to get as many people talking about it as possible. My first thought was not for a newsletter (or I would probably have picked a shorter name!) but that was rapidly what developed. Still, I want the newsletter that the exchange has become to be as accessible to as many people as possible. At least for now, there is no subscription rate. I have borrowed the "share ware" concept from computer software. If someone so requests, I will add them to the mailing list. If you get the newsletter, find it interesting, useful or entertaining and want to make a contribution to help with the cost of producing it, then I will gladly accept whatever you decide it's worth to you. There is also a selfish side to this in that I have committed to a year. Beyond that I have to make a decision as to whether I want to continue to invest the resources of time, energy and money to continue the publication. By not working from a subscription base and letting people contribute on the merit of the material they have already gotten, I am leaving myself that option to stop. To this point in time, the system has worked but not as well as I had hoped. Donations are covering approximately 1/4 of the costs of production, printing and mailing. Some folks have been extremely generous. Know that I do appreciate your contributions!

I have been asked about back issues - which struck me as rather funny because there have only been two - but also forced me to make a money decision. In order to keep costs down, I only print roughly the number of copies equal to names on the mailing list. I have no real stockpile of back issues on hand. I do have the original copies however and if anyone wants back issues I can make them. But in that case, I do ask for \$3.50 for each issue. That same charge would apply for old or new issues for institutions such as libraries or historical societies. Or I'm willing to do a publication exchange.

If you would like me to add your name to the mailing list, send me your name and mailing address. Lots of the people on the exchange use electronic mail so if you have an e-mail address, I'll include that on the list. And if you want to submit a query, send it along too. In fact, I'm always looking for material to include. If you've found a link to Melungeons in your family or have something you would like to share with everyone else, please send it!

I do qualify however, that I reserve the right to reject material. I've never done that yet (I've lost things sometimes but never rejected anything!) but it seems the safe thing to do to make that statement. I would also remind people that while the newsletter is meant to be a way to share information, if you use material from here elsewhere, please source that with the original author and the newsletter. In general I think that is often one of the shortcomings of Melungeon research---the failure to completely document both primary and secondary sources. If you do submit research, be sure that you include the sources as well.

With that said, I hope you enjoy this issue and that it proves helpful to your research!

Bill Fields

# DR. BRENT KENNEDY RESPONDS TO VIRGINIA DEMARCE

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*The June issue of the National Genealogical Society Quarterly contained an article by Virginia Easley DeMarce entitled "Review Essay: The Melungeons" (National Genealogical Society Quarterly Vol 84, No. 2 June 1996 page 134-149) in which she set out to review Dr. Brent Kennedy's book The Melungeons: The Resurrection of a Proud People. Her opinions were highly critical, both of the book and of Dr. Kennedy personally. I received the following response to DeMarce's article from Dr. Kennedy along with the explanation that the National Genealogical Society Quarterly had refused to publish it.*

*My own feeling is that Melungeon researchers are too often like the story of the blind men and the elephant, where one grabs a leg and declares that an elephant is like a tree while the one who grabbed the ear maintains an elephant is like a fan. The one with the trunk is sure both are wrong...an elephant is like a snake! There is a great deal of unnecessary conflict and disagreement that goes on, when, I believe, in the end everyone is generally going to be right. Demarce however, goes well beyond an argument as to theories--and whether we like it or not, **all** our most dearly held positions are at this point only theories -- and seeks to discredit Dr. Kennedy. In fact, in my opinion, she seeks to end all further discussion as to the origin and history of the Melungeons. Her article is very much a personal attack whether it is cloaked in the trappings of an academic "review" or not. Anyone familiar with DeMarce's work is aware that her opinions and theories run counter to those of Dr. Kennedy and the Melungeon Research Committee. Defending one's own position does not mean the right to destroy the personal and professional credibility of those who may disagree and since this latest article in the National Genealogical Society Quarterly crosses that line between a review of a book or even an expression of differing opinions into an area of personal attack, I absolutely believe that Dr. Kennedy has every right to this opportunity for a voice in response.*

*For those who have not read Review Essay: The Melungeons, I believe you can obtain back issues directly from the National Genealogical Society. The National Genealogical Society Quarterly is also available in most libraries with a genealogical collection.*

**Elizabeth Mills, Editor**  
**National Genealogical Quarterly**  
1732 Ridgedale Drive  
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To the Editor:

I am responding to Virginia DeMarce's "essay-review" of my book, The Melungeons: The Resurrection of a Proud People, as published in the June, 1996 issue of **National Genealogical Quarterly**. Although DeMarce's "review" covered an extraordinarily lengthy sixteen pages, I am keeping my response to one-third the space allotted to DeMarce in expectation of its **unedited inclusion in your next issue**.

**First**, it is unfortunate that the NGQ is published quarterly, since this enforces a three month delay between DeMarce's

attack and any possible response on my part (a fortuitous circumstance for DeMarce - a former President on the National Genealogical Society - whose previously published works strongly conflict with the theories set forth in my book). I can only assume that, with the receipt of my response, that the playing fields will now be equalized and that, in fairness to me, DeMarce will likewise be forced to wait three months before responding via the next issue of NGQ.

**Second, Virginia's scathing and personal attack misses the point of the book. It is a book of speculation begging for more inquiry and stating the author's limitations from the onset.** As Virginia points out - and I admit early and often in my book - - I am not a professional historian, anthropologist, physician, or genealogist, but a simple human being who, after a debilitating illness, stumbled onto something that I found to be both intriguing and deserving of further research, but being generally ignored - and even ridiculed - by those I considered to be more qualified researchers. My book is an up-front call for help from qualified scholars, with the entire premise of the book being "**Here is something worth examining...I know there are errors in my work...please help solve this mystery.**" Most reviewers quickly grasped the nature of the book, agreed with the intriguing nature of the evidence, and accepted the book for what it was intended to be. An example of the result I sought can be seen most recently in historian William Anderson's review in the February, 1996 issue of the Journal of Southern History. Anderson, who takes no stand either way, at least understood the thrust of the book and concludes his review with precisely the message I had hoped for:

*"Kennedy had not intended to produce the final word on the Melungeons. However, he has presented new ideas to explore."*

Virginia's "review" seeks to dismiss and discourage any further inquiry into the origin of the Melungeons, does nothing to encourage team work, and absolutely incited needless bickering and unnecessary hard feelings. One can only deduce that she is threatened in some way by further research into the Melungeon question and must resort to venomous and personal attacks in order to halt such efforts. For the record, I am here to stay, at least until God decides my work is finished. And attacks such as this only serve to motivate me further. I will not go away.

**Third, Virginia conveniently does not mention that in early 1994 I made several indirect requests via mutual acquaintances - and two direct written requests - for her assistance and involvement prior to the publication of the book - to no avail. Not even a response.** The first - and only - communication received by me from Virginia DeMarce was more than two years later (early in June, 1996) when she notified me by mail that her review of my book would be published in the June issue of NGQ. Our Melungeon related records are considerable, and include numerous documents and much data never seen by DeMarce. **All have been offered to her for her review from the beginning, but she has shown no interest.** DeMarce's mind is obviously made up and I suspect nothing will change it. A closed academic mind runs the great danger of becoming a pedantic dinosaur in a modern world **where intimidation no longer serves as a sufficient tool to discourage unwanted inquiries and , even more threatening, actual enlightenment.**

**Fourth, DeMarce is in extreme error when she suggests that I have done no research regarding my bout with sarcoidosis, insinuating that mine is an isolated case.** There are more than two dozen documented cases of sarcoidosis among fellow Melungeon descendants in my home town of Wise, Virginia alone. Hundreds more fill our files. Physicians in Wise, Abingdon, and Kingsport, Tennessee are assisting in tracking the flow. I am in touch with two Lumbee Indians who also share this illness with me. Other cases are surfacing regularly, having been previously misdiagnosed as chronic fatigue syndrome, lupus, Lyme's Disease, etc. DeMarce might have known this had she been willing to communicate with me, but the truth would have taken away her artificially potent lead argument in the review. Also conveniently overlooked by DeMarce are half a dozen confirmed cases of the extremely rare genetic disorder *Machado-Joseph Disease* among Melungeon descendants (most recently in an elderly East Tennessee male now cooperating with Portuguese geneticists at McGill University, and an eastern Kentucky woman diagnosed with **MJD** this spring at Johns Hopkins, who has also been referred to McGill) . Other rare genetically based diseases confirmed among Melungeon descendants include *Behcet's Syndrome* - named for the Turkish physician who first identified this predominantly Middle Eastern eye and joint disorder and, of course, literally hundreds of cases of *thalassmia*. Obviously DeMarce is unaware of this line of research. Furthermore, Dr. James Guthrie's gene frequency study of 177 East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia Melungeon blood samples (Tennessee Anthropologist, Spring, 1990) indicated no significant differences between Melungeons and populations in Spain and Portugal, North Africa, the Middle East and the Aegean region of Turkey.

**Fifth, DeMarce accuses me of redefining the meaning of Melungeon (at least in comparison with her definition) and expanding the perceived range of these people. This is the point of the book and I happily plead guilty, thanks**

**to the incredible deluge of data from other Melungeon related families! I am convinced - as are others- that the original "Melungeon" population was much larger than DeMarce supposes and, consequently, Melungeon descendants are more numerous and than DeMarce calculates.** I base this on the sheer number of geographically based responses we have received from individuals related to one another claiming the same heritage, the legends of similar origins, (e.g. Portuguese, Turkish, Moorish) among such related subgroups as the Melungeons, Redbones, Carmel Indians, the Brown People, the Cubans, the Brass Ankles, the Lumbee, etc.) the Melungeon connection to numerous southeastern tribal groups, and the growing evidence that **sixteenth century America was far more ethnically diverse - and politically complicated - than DeMarce realizes.**

DeMarce incorrectly assumes that a "white" or "black" census record means just that. **The point of the book is that it doesn't!** I couldn't help but smile as DeMarce set about to prove that my ancestors were "white" according to the old census records. Of course they were, just as I am "white" . That's how we survived and also how our heritage - whether Melungeon, Native American, or African was lost. My coarse black (and grey!) hair, my deep tanning ability, my total lactase deficiency - all tie me to **non-white ancestry** (Middle Eastern/Native American African) that I knew nothing about until I began this journey. And that DeMarce says do not exist! In a more personally painful family connection between my family and the east Tennessee Melungeons (a connection that DeMarce likewise insinuates does not exist) I, along with my great-great aunt, a Robinson/Mullins, share the near-mythical, rare, but real Tennessee characteristic of having been born with six fingers on each hand. Yes, Virginia, it's true and I have the surgical scars and medical records to prove it. And, yes, I've seen the same hand structure on two equally unfortunate Melungeon "cousins" from the Blackwater section on the Hancock County, Tennessee/Lee County, Virginia line. While it was a source of intense emotional pain for me as a child, as it has been for them, it's suddenly one more little piece of evidence tying me to the Melungeons that I'm sure even Virginia will appreciate.

**Sixth**, "Melungeon" is not an ethnic group per se, which DeMarce undoubtedly understands intellectually but fails to grasp emotionally. It was a phrase (most likely "meluc can" - a Turkish term meaning "cursed soul" and **pronounced identically to "Melungeon"**) used as a self-descriptive term by a large group of mixed race, darker-complexioned people who were trapped in a hostile environment. As such, the term stuck with the various spin-off groups who migrated here and there but were spawned from this original population. Just as many Americans who possess a Scots-Irish surname from an ancestor who preceded them by seven generations proudly proclaim their "Ulster" blood, so did the legacy of the earliest Melungeons continue far beyond the original settlers. DeMarce seems to have trouble with this concept, but it is no different than the 40 million "Irish" who magically appear each St. Patrick's Day. Dark people are equally entitled to recall - and celebrate - their heritage as well. There are far more Melungeons than DeMarce ever imagined. I had no idea either until they began to seek me out, which is also what led me to write the book. An enormous number of people have been aware of this heritage, but frustrated in their efforts to learn more about themselves because of the prejudices of researchers who deny its relevance, and even its existence.

DeMarce inadvertently supported the heart of my thesis by pointing out the obviously erroneous census records which list many of my ancestors as "white"! I'm certain I have other ancestors who fell into the "black" classification but were irretrievably lost to us because of our "white" ancestors' attempt to both escape such a classification and to distance themselves from those relatives who were unable to achieve the prized "white" status. This is what prejudice and ethnic cleansing are all about. Virginia DeMarce needs to recognize that history is not cold, impersonal lines inked on yellowed paper, but instead is reflected in the human beings who live and experience it. Although I cannot imagine that DeMarce is unfamiliar with these works, I suggest she re-read two excellent articles that will explain the tragic consequences of "documentary genocide." Jeffrey L. Hantman's *Monacan Archaeology and History* and J. David Smith's *Legal Racism and Documentary Genocide*, both published in the Spring/Summer, 1992 issue of *Lynch's Ferry*.

**Seventh**, tied to the above subject, J. David Smith's article also addresses in some detail the horrific racist activities of Dr. W. A. Plecker, the Commonwealth of Virginia's Registrar of Vital Statistics. I am puzzled over DeMarce's implication that I am self-centeredly upset with Plecker for his brutal and punitive control over, in DeMarce's words, "Kennedy's people." I never said that! I was - and continue to be - appalled over Plecker's brutality toward **all darker complexioned people: Native Americans, African-Americans, Melungeons, and other mixed race groups. This is but one of several glaring examples of DeMarce putting her words into my mouth and then criticizing me for supposedly saying them.** I have enclosed a copy of a letter written by Plecker in 1930 which I believe illustrates the depravity of the man and also sadly illustrates how our census and other genealogical "records" are often created. If racial classifications were being determined a century ago in the same manner as Plecker was determining them for the

Commonwealth of Virginia in 1930 (and well into the 1940s), then the paper trail that DeMarce depends so heavily upon is virtually worthless. And I believe such to be the case. I know the prejudice my "white" family suffered despite achieving their desired classification - a classification that was NOT readily accepted by their neighbors in Wise County. I would be interested in seeing Virginia DeMarce sit across a table from my Mother, my great aunt Helen Nash Mayo, my uncle Vernoy Moore, and other family members, stare into their Asian and Mediterranean and African faces, and tell them that their pain and suffering was purely "fiction" as she asserted in her "review." They have read her "review" and, after finally gaining the courage to speak openly of their past experiences as victims of prejudice, were pained by DeMarce's clinical - and incorrect - assessment of their personal realities. Their reaction, however, was illuminating, for I saw first hand how easily people can be hurt and how entire ethnic groups can be intimidated into silence by those they perceive as "educated" or "powerful".

Prior to 1788, the English parliament - with a straight face and all the necessary "legal" apparatus - held that the British had preceded the Aborigines to Australia and used this farce as justification to confiscate Aboriginal lands. This is the same government that created our census gathering machine and set the American standard for classifying people for years to come. **DeMarce's trust in our early records far exceeds mine. Virginia is a fabulously talented genealogist, a wonderful stickler for detail. Her skills are, at least to a layperson like me, incredible (which is why I earlier sought her assistance). But the end result of the application of her skills is only as valid as the records with which she is working. And this is her great weakness: her unquestioning acceptance of old records as accurate records. She will never know the full truth based on the written records. Ask the Jews of Germany, or the Bosnian Muslims, or the American Indians. And yes, ask the Melungeons. I question the records now and I will continue to question them because I am a thinking human being who can see the incongruities, both in the written records and in the faces of my family. I believe the attached letter from W. A. Plecker - a clear effort to create through bribery a false written record - will further illustrate this point in a manner directly linked to the Melungeons.**

**Eighth**, contrary to DeMarce's statement that I lack an understanding of historical events, I instead assert that DeMarce remains mired in a 1950s concept of southeastern population patterns - and the antiquated census data that supports these presumed patterns - and that this dogmatic approach to ethnic categorization has severely limited her ability to move forward. DeMarce also fails to grasp that historical research also moves forward. We learn more every day about the pyramids of ancient Egypt, Viking explorations of the New World (a concept once ridiculed by people like DeMarce), and human habitation in the New World thousands of years before 1950s scholars would ever have conceived possible. History is not a static, unchanging, neatly compartmentalized personal toy. It belongs to all humanity, and begs to be constantly reviewed in light of new knowledge.

In this regard, research coming from scholarly teams at the University of Istanbul and the University of Marmara (headed by the respected Ottoman scholar, Dr. Zekeriya Kursun), among others, as well as the growing evidence of a heavier Spanish and Portuguese presence (witness the outstanding archaeological work at Santa Elena by team member Dr. Chester DePratter and the eminent Stanley South, as well as related research by Spanish researcher Eloy Gallegos and Portuguese researchers Manuel Mira and Fernanda Lopes) will soon serve notice that our shores were far more multi-cultural than DeMarce has ever imagined. My research, as well, is not a trivial pursuit: in October I will be making my **fourth** journey to Turkey for the specific purpose of cooperative research. **To castigate those who simply want to know the truth, and to ridicule our ancestors who seemed to know who they were, serves no humane - or scholarly - purpose other than to defend the personal agenda (and previously published work) of Virginia DeMarce.**

**Ninth**, beyond the legends and folklore of our origins, and the powerful genetic and medical evidence, DeMarce also seems to dismiss the staggering linguistic connections that are difficult to explain without taking into consideration a broad-based admixture between possible Ottoman/Mediterranean cultures and Native Americans and southeastern "whites". A few examples of more than 200 already identified:

The Cherokee term for themselves was "*ani yun wiya*" meaning "the principal people". The Ottoman term for "the principal people" was - and still is in modern Turkish, "*ana yogun*" - pronounced identically since the Turkish "g" is silent.

The old name for Kentucky was "*Kan Tuck*," meaning "dark and bloody ground" in the local "Indian" dialect. "*Kan tok*" is Turkish for "full of blood."

The top tribal administrator for the Creek Indian was called a "*mico*." A "*mico*" held the same position on a sixteenth-century Ottoman galley.

"*Hodja*" is the Creek Indian word for the tribe's wisest and strongest warrior: "*hodja*" is also the Turkish word for the most respected teacher in the Muslim community.

The Cherokee wore turbans and Ottoman style robes. The Creeks wore fez. And when the Creeks were driven into Florida they changed their name to the "runaways." - "*Seminole*" in their language. "*Sami nal*" is old Ottoman, meaning literally "Semites who gave up."

Croatian and Bosnian sailors almost always sailed with the Ottoman navy. They called themselves "*Croatan*" - nearly identical to "*Croatoan*" - the same mysterious "Indian" group the Lost Colony supposedly left with, leaving the infamous carving on the tree for future historians to ponder - and argue - over. This connection, if pursued and born out through research, could add great credence to the Lumbee's longstanding claims of origin - including the sometimes scoffed at Lost Colony connection.

It is well documented that the late nineteenth-century Melungeons of east Tennessee and southwest Virginia called a watch a "*sat*," variously spelled as "*sot*." (see John Rice Irwin's **Alex Stewart: Portrait of a Pioneer**, 1985). The Turkish word for a timepiece of any kind is a "*saat*"

The Turkish word for "Huge noise" is "*Ne yaygara*" - yea, pronounced identically to "Niagara."

The Turkish term for "good cotton" is "*pamukey*" (pamuk-iyi) - quite similar to "Pamunkey," and eastern Virginia Native American tribe to which many Melungeons claim a relationship.

The Creek word for God, "*Sa-kee-tom-masee*" is eerily similar to the old Ottoman/Arabic term, "*Saki-tam-Mesih*," literally "the giver (cupbearer) of the pure Messiah."

"*Pohotan*" is Ottoman-Croatian for "cruel leader" and the Ottoman-Croatian "*Matorka*" - meaning "precious little girl" is nearly identical to Pocahontas's real name of "*Matoaka*."

The old Appalachian term "*gaum*" meaning messy or sad, is pronounced identically to the Turkish "*gam*" meaning messy or sad.

The Hurricane section of Wise was originally called "*Fernanda*"; the Blackwater section of Lee County, "*Dona*" - pronounced identically to the Portuguese "*Dona*" and meaning bridal gift (different than the Spanish version of "*Dona*" meaning "honored lady").

And this is merely the tip of the iceberg. And even if all these amazing similarities only prove some sort of great cosmic coincidence, how can any thinking person not be at least a little curious? Virginia DeMarce is not. I am, as are others. And her taunts and criticisms will not deter me - and others - from further exploration.

Incidentally, I have just received a communication from the Turkish researcher **Chedvet Kaya** informing me that the Ottoman archival evidence indicates Ottoman sailors were taken to the Canary Islands in both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Canaries, of course, provided (along with the Portuguese Azores) a significant percentage of the New World settlers for Spain and Portugal, an established fact which even DeMarce cannot argue with. In May Turkish researcher/newspaperman **Nuri Yilmaz** of **Turkiye Gazeti** discovered in Istanbul's Ottoman archival records that, in 1558, the Portuguese sold the British a sizeable number of Ottoman prisoners of war which the British Navy purportedly planned on taking to the New World for labor purposes. And **James H. Quoll** in his exceptionally well documented **Azores Islands: A History** (Golden Shield International, Turlare, California, 1993) documents the pre-Columbian Jewish and Ottoman (Moorish/Turkish) populations that immigrated to the Azores to later serve as the New World settlers. Quill asserts with documentation that "...Azorean settlement in North America...was initiated in the early 16th century." It appears that Ottomans may have arrived on our shores in numerous ways. I am awaiting copies of Kay's documents from Istanbul's Ottoman library before including this data in either the book or our updates. But rest assured, this journey has only begun and the book, imperfect as it might be, has served its purpose to rally qualified researchers.

**Tenth**, a few problems - some trivial, some serious - in DeMarce's review that should be addressed:

\* As my editor at the Mercer University Press will confirm, a line was inadvertently left out under the photograph of Ida Powers Kennedy. She died in childbirth with her third child, not my grandfather which she is obviously holding. The mistake was caught immediately after publication and with the reprint it will be obvious how the deletion both occurred and was missed. And while DeMarce can suggest that, given Ida's aged appearance, she probably wasn't Ida, she is wrong. The woman in the photograph is indeed my great-grandmother, Ida Powers.

\* While DeMarce may also question whether the photograph of Major Pelham Colley is indeed Major Pelham Colley, I can assure you, based on his identification by his daughter (my grandmother who is in the photograph with him) as well as other family members, he is indeed Major Pelham Colley. Major was approximately forty years of age in the photo and in my opinion looks his age. She is correct about the Colley ancestral line containing errors: the new replacement lines (including Jasper Colley and Margaret Southerland) was submitted to the Press approximately one year ago.

\* DeMarce suggests that I am in error in believing French Acadians would have added swarthinness to the Melungeon population. This is totally turned around. I believe French Acadians would have "lightened" the Melungeon population and would have been accepted readily into it as "political" refugees as opposed to "racial" ones.

\* **DeMarce criticizes me for including "Phoenician seamen" (page 148) among the probable Melungeon ancestries. This is a blatant falsehood** - I discount this romanticized theory in my book and DeMarce knows it. Although someone may prove me wrong, I do not believe ancient Phoenicians are part of the Melungeon ancestral fabric, other than through genes passed on to all Mediterranean populations. In fact, the thrust of the book is to lay to rest such romantic notions as "lost tribes of Israel" and "ancient seafaring Phoenicians" I am convinced that the Melungeons are indeed tri-racial and are descended from Native Americans and **sixteenth-century** European, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and African settlers - voluntary or otherwise. This is a pretty conservative theory, frankly, and I am bewildered not only by DeMarce's frantic resistance, but her inexplicable need to throw in the "Phoenician" line which I certainly did not say or even insinuate. **That was not a very nice - and certainly not an honest - thing to do.**

\* Despite DeMarce's assertion, nowhere do I indicate that my Colley forbearers were the victims of undue racial prejudice (page 14 in DeMarce's "review"). This seems to be a common practice in this alleged book review - inventing statements, attributing them to me, then lambasting me for what I supposedly said.

\* DeMarce insinuates that simply because my ancestor, William Robertson, couldn't spell his name, claimed to be Scots-Irish but was born in London, and traveled through Robeson County, North Carolina, that I suspect he was Melungeon, Virginia fails to mention that William's family **claimed to be Portuguese** and this claim is documented in my book and a critical piece of the information. Another "straw dog" created by DeMarce to mislead the reader as to what I really said.

\* My "claimed ascent to Pocahontas." to use Virginia's words, is in reality prefaced in the book by my statement that I cannot verify it but in include it only because some of my family cling to its authenticity, demonstrating, at least some perceived connection to the Powhatan tribes on the part of some family members. Virginia's statement, again, is misleading. (The actual quote from the book is: "Indeed, the Bowlings in my family can demonstrate a supposedly direct line to Pocahontas, and so can other Melungeon families. I honestly do not know if our line is valid but on the chance that it is I have included it here." )

\*Because some of my ancestors were elected to public office, DeMarce assumes that all my ancestors were "white." I am descended from many people. Some were Scots-Irish, some German, and so on. **But even election to public office, especially in the nineteenth-century Appalachian region, does not guarantee the "whiteness" of the electee.** I strongly suggest that DeMarce familiarize herself with the work of emerging scholars such as Darlene Wilson at the University of Kentucky, whose groundbreaking work will, in my opinion, revolutionize the way we look at race in the Appalachian mountains. Wilson's premise - well researched - is that as Melungeons and other mixed race groups migrated into sparsely settled areas, they successfully "reinvented" themselves as "whites" thus making their way into the political process and, occasionally, even re-defining both the political process and even the definition of "white." Some of my "elected official" ancestors probably benefited from this same phenomenon. And anthropologist upon examining my family will tell you point blank that a great deal besides western/northern European "white" is at play. Which, again, is a major point of the book. DeMarce's near total adherence to the "official record" is debilitating and illustrative of how



the Melungeon heritage has been stolen away.

\* **In a strangely bizarre statement, DeMarce seems to express a bias against Middle Easterners**, providing possible insights into her longstanding unwillingness to accept a more diverse origin for the Melungeons. She criticizes my ponderings on Vardy Collins and my inclusion of the oft mentioned "Navarrh" as a possible form of his name that might tie him to Iberian or Arabic origin. She dismisses this possibility with the chastisement that I have overlooked "the solid pioneer Vardeman that the man actually was." **DeMarce's statement reeks of ethnic prejudice by insinuating that if Vardy was Arab or Portuguese that he obviously wasn't a "solid Pioneer."** **Regardless of Vardy's ethnicity he was still Vardy Collins and most certainly a pioneer, Arab, Portuguese, or otherwise.** But there is still a possible twist of fate along another line that still casts a shadow over DeMarce's rationale. Since the publication of the book I have learned that "Var duman" - yes, pronounced just like "Vardeman" is Turkish, meaning, amazingly, "Everything is hopeless" or, literally, "all that one possesses has gone up in smoke." Perhaps coincidental, but how appropriate for this old Melungeon who had indeed suffered greatly.

\* And I am greatly puzzled by DeMarce's making light of the possibility that Mediterranean/Middle Eastern immigrants might have Anglicized their names in order to survive in an Anglo world (page 147). James Guill (above mentioned author) presents several cases of Portuguese doing just that upon their arrival in America, I have an Arab Lebanese born friend whose name is now Mike Anderson, and Native Americans did it en masse. My wife is an enrolled member of the White Earth Band of the Minnesota Chippewas, but her people are all Branleys and Morrisons. Why should this seem so strange to DeMarce? It's a fact of American life and has been for centuries.

While I readily admit errors in my work - and time and again caution readers in this regard - the above examples should illustrate that **no one is above making errors**. But errors are gauged in matters of kind as well as degree. And as I said earlier, **the error of accepting early American census records as unalterable fact may be the most egregious - and far-reaching error of all.**

**Finally**, some readers may be interested to know that a revised edition of the book with genealogical corrections and expansions (made over the past two years thanks to those who heeded my plea) and significantly updated genetic, medical, and cultural data is due out in November. The basic theories I propose in the first book remain unchanged, but are more heavily supported by data collected since the first printing.

**In summary**, the real importance of the Melungeon story goes far beyond any trivial need for me or anyone else to "prove" their ancestry. And it goes far beyond any historical, cultural, or medical benefits that may result from keener self knowledge (although it is not an insignificant health benefit to know one's full ethnic and racial heritage). No, the real benefit of the Melungeon story - and its legacy of incredible ethnic diversity - is that it ties all races and all people together in a way that few other scenarios ever could, or would. And the lessons to be gained from such demonstrated kinship are reaching the masses in a way that few, if any stories ever accomplished before. I speak regularly to youth groups, about the Melungeons in particular but hidden racial and ethnic relationships in general. And the results are outstanding - young "white" and "black" and "native American" children marveling in their newly discovered kinship. For me, this is a direction I plan on moving more fully toward, leaving the work of genealogy to the genealogists and history to the historians. I have done my part, and while it wasn't done perfectly I believe history will show that it wasn't done as badly as some might believe.

### **A Challenge**

I realize full well that research takes time. I have access to the evidence that has accumulated in our files since the book's publication, and I see the efforts now underway by qualified researchers in various fields. It may take five years, or ten years, or twenty years, but **I am convinced - and am willing to wager my professional and personal reputation on the certainty - that at some point the evidence will undeniably prove a significant but heretofore ignored Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and African heritage that has influenced our southeastern racial, ethnic, and cultural heritages. If Virginia DeMarce is absolutely convinced that such is not the case, as her "review" would certainly lead one to believe, then I call on her to say so - in writing and, preferably in the NEXT issue of the NGQ - so that future scholars can judge us accordingly.** If she is willing to commit herself in a written opinion, then time will take care of everything. If she is not, or prefers to continue dancing around the issue, then I strongly recommend that she stop fighting those who would be her friends and apply her considerable talents toward examining - without prejudice and bias - the ever growing body of evidence surrounding the diverse origins of the Melungeons. We have always been

willing to listen to Virginia DeMarce, but we, too, have minds and voices.

With appreciation for the opportunity to respond,

N. Brent Kennedy PhD.

*The following is a transcript of the letter from W.A. Plecker. The copy Dr. Kennedy included was a photocopy of the original which was on letterhead from the Virginia Bureau of Vital Statistics*

*Bureau of Vital Statistics  
State Department of Health  
Richmond*

*August 5, 1930*

*Mr. J.P. Kelly,  
Trustee of Schools,  
Pennington Gap,  
Lee County, Virginia*

*Dear Sir:*

*Our office has had a great deal of trouble in reference to the persistence of a group of people living in that section known as "Melungeons", whose families came from Newman's Ridge, Tennessee. They are evidently of negro origin and are so recognized in Tennessee, but when they have come over into Virginia they have been trying to pass as white. In a few instances we learn that they have married a low type of white people which increases the problem.*

*We understand that some of these negros tried to send their children to the Pennington Gap white school and that they were turned out by the school board. Will you please give us a statement as to the names of the children that were thus refused admittance into the white schools and the names and addresses of their parents. If possible, we desire the full name of the father and the maiden name of the mother.*

*As these families originated out of Virginia, our old birth, death and marriage records covering the period , 1855 through 1896, do not have them listed by color as are those whose families have lived in Virginia for a number of generations. They are demanding of us that we register them as white, which we persistently refuse to do. If we can get a statement that the School Board refused them admittance into white schools, we can then use that as one of the grounds upon which we would refuse to classify them as white. That, of course, is a matter of history and does not involve any individual but the whole School Board, the responsibility thus being divided up, while few individuals who write us as to their negro characteristics are willing to have their names used or would appear in court should it become necessary. This makes it very difficult for us to secure necessary information to properly classify them in our office. If the School Trustees will co-operate with our office and will refuse them admittance into white schools and give us information when such refusals are made, we can without great difficulty hold them in their place, but this co-operation is very essential.*

*I do not know who is the Clerk of the School Board or who would be the proper one to apply to but your name has been given to me.*

*Yours very truly (signed)W.A. Plecker State Registrar*

# A Black Dutch Family

By  
Kay Martin

As my Mother-in-law was growing up in Pittsburg Co., OK., she was told by her mother, Sallie Elizabeth Helton, that their family was "Black Dutch". No one seems to know what that means in our family. In fact, the term "Black Dutch" seems to have many meanings, from the descendants of Dutch women and Spanish soldiers to residents of the Black Forest to a code term for mixed race people. In my husband's family, I suspect that it meant either Melungeon or Native American.

If anyone can help solve this problem, I will appreciate it very much! I'm interested both in our own Black Dutch family and the origin and use of the term in general. For example, I believe it would be most helpful if we could get some general idea of when and/or where "Black Dutch" first came into use. If you have a tradition of Black Dutch in your family I would like to hear from you.

## Ancestry of Sallie Elizabeth HELTON

--- 1st Generation ---

1. Sallie Elizabeth HELTON was born on 14 September 1899 in Murfreesboro, Rutherford Co, Tennessee. She married William "Bert" DOUGLAS, son of Joseph 'Joe' DOUGLASS and Melissa Jane (--?--) on 27 September 1914 in Pittsburg Co, Oklahoma. She died on 24 June 1968 in Chickasha, Grady Co, Oklahoma at age 68. Burial in Pittsburg Co., OK.

--- 2nd Generation ---

2. James Edmond HELTON. He was born on 27 April 1874 in Tennessee. He died on 8 December 1941 in Pittsburg Co, Oklahoma at age 67.

3. Emma HELTON. On the 1900 census it says Emma was born in 1885, but she listed her age at the time of the census as 17 - which fits better with the rest of her family. She died in 1910 in Meridianville, Madison Co, Alabama.

--- 3rd Generation ---

4. Andrew Peter HELTON. Born on 6 February 1845 in Kittrel, Rutherford Co, Tennessee. He married first Nancy Liza JAMISON, on 6 February 1866 in Rutherford Co, Tennessee. He married second, Margaret BURNETT on 8 September 1877 in Murfreesboro, Rutherford Co, Tennessee. Nyla Potter of Kent WA, has that Andrew Peter Helton died 12 Oct 1910. He made his will 9 June 1904, and it was proven 26 Nov 1910.

5. Nancy Liza JAMISON. Born circa 1847 in Tennessee.

6. Joseph Marion 'Joe' HELTON. He was born in February 1856 in Tennessee. He married Tennessee 'Tennie' BILLINGSLEY, daughter of Anderson W. BILLINGSLEY and Louisa BRYANT on 26 January 1878 in Rutherford Co, Tennessee. He married Ella NIPPER after 1900 in Tennessee. He died on 6 February 1923 in Rutherford Co, Tennessee. On the 1900 census soundex, Joe Helton was living in Rutherford County, Tennessee. He was not married

at that time. Joseph died of pneumonia after coming down with the flu.

7. Tennessee 'Tennie' BILLINGSLEY. Tennie was not on the 1900 census with Joseph. She was born in 1860 in Arkansas. She married Joseph Marion 'Joe' HELTON, son of Joshua D. HELTON and Nancy WILLIAMS on 26 January 1878 in Rutherford Co, Tennessee. She died between 1898 and 1900 in Rutherford Co, Tennessee.

--- 4th Generation ---

8. William HELTON William Helton, a Confederate soldier, died in Yankee prison camp at Johnson's Island, OH. He made his will in 1864, leaving 160 acres of land to his wife, Nancy, and appointed his older daughter, Sarah Elizabeth Helton, guardian of his younger children. William was captured 26 Jan 1863 in Rutherford Co., TN, and shipped to a military prison at Louisville, KY.. He was moved 22 July 1863 to Johnson Island He had written a letter to his wife, Nancy, on 9 Oct 1864, and knew that he was dying at that time. William was a conscript officer. It was his job to draft men into the service of the confederate army. He was buried in Rutherford Co, Tennessee. He was born circa 1815 in Rutherford Co, Tennessee. He married Nancy Yearwood SHIPP, on 26 October 1836 in Rutherford Co, Tennessee. He died on 17 October 1864 in Johnson Island, Ohio.

9. Nancy Yearwood SHIPP. Born circa 1818 in Tennessee.

10. Thomas Allen JAMISON He was born on 25 April 1811. He married Caroline FULKS on 22 April 1835 in Rutherford Co, Tennessee. He died on 6 March 1873 at age 61.

11. Caroline FULKS. Born in 1817.

12. Joshua D. HELTON This ancestor not completely proven. In 1870 Joshua and Nancy were living in Bedford County, Tennessee near Shelbyville (21 ST Civil District). He married Nancy WILLIAMS on 15 February 1843 in Rutherford Co, Tennessee.

13. Nancy WILLIAMS.

14. Anderson W. BILLINGSLEY. He was born in 1832 in Bledsoe Co, Tennessee, moved to AR with his father about 1841/42 and was living at home in 1850, Clark Co., AR. He married prior to 1856 in Clark Co., AR He died in August 1870 in Rutherford Co, Tennessee. Moved to TX in 1860 and enlisted in Washington Co., TX, Sept 1861 as Private K, 8th Texas Cavalry (Terry's Rangers) for 6 months - discharged in 1862 the Returned to AR where he enlisted on 22 May 1862 at Washington, AR as Private D, 1st AR Cavalry C.S.A.; captured at Mound City, Kansas 24 Oct 1864; sent to Alton and Rock Island, IL, then paroled at Camp Lee, VA 28 Mar 1865.

15. Louisa BRYANT. Was living in Arkadelphia, AR when she married Anderson Billingsley. She was born in 1835 in Tennessee.

--- 5th Generation ---

16. Peter HELTON was born circa 1790 in NC.

17. Sarah Elizabeth COURTNEY Sarah's maiden name not proven.

18. L.D. SHIPP. Not proven that he was the father of this family.

24. Peter HELTON (see above)

25. Sarah Elizabeth COURTNEY (see above)

28. Samuel BILLINGSLEY A statement by Andrew C. Myers of TN in 1930 says: 'Sam married a society woman who loved to go to dances and such. Sam did not approve of this. He moved west in the early 1840's, and I do not think he carried her with him.' He migrated to Arkansas about 1841/42 and located in Clark Co. and engaged in

farming. In 1850 he is listed with a wife named Nancy, born KY 1812. From the difference in the ages of the 3rd and 4th child she is probably his 2nd wife. They disappear from this county before 1860. They may have been deceased or may have returned to TN. While three Grandsons have been located, they do not appear to know anything of their Grandparents names or where they resided.

29. (--?--) ANDERSON. Not proven.

--- 6th Generation ---

32. Peter? HELTON

56. John BILLINGSLEY He was born on 10 September 1781 in Onslow Co., NC. Moved from NC to Sullivan Co., TN with his parents in 1787. Married (1) on 10 Oct 1802, Martha BLACKWOOD, b. NC 12 Mar 1786. From a published account in Biographical Album in 1808 and furnished by his son, Leander T. Billingsley, the claim is made that John and his bride started from NC on a blind pony to find themselves a home. They finally reached the Sequatchie Valley, Bledsoe Co., TN with a cash capital of one dollar and twenty five cents. This marriage may have taken place in NC but we feel that as no documentary evidence exists to prove it the logical presumption is that it occurred either in Sullivan Co., TN or or Washington Co., TN and that it was from this point the trip to Sequatchie Valley was started. They located in Bledsoe Co., TN, cleared some land and made a crop with the pony. During the spring of the following year, the pony fell and broke it's leg and the second crop was made with a young bull. Martha Blackwood died on 11 Mar 1829 and he married (2) on 15 Sept 1831 to Jane HOODENPILE, b. NC 21 April 1812, d/o Philip Hoodenpile, a native of Holland. From a humble start, John Billingsley became one of the wealthy and prominent citizens of Bledsoe Co., TN. He served some 40 years as a member of the County Court, and part of the time it's Chairman. He also represented the County in the State Legislature. At the time of his death 25 May 1856 his property was valued at \$85,000.00. Jane survived him many years and died 3 Sept 1894. The family were Baptists. He and his two wives are buried in the Old Smyrna Graveyard. The graves of John and Jane are marked, but that of Martha on his side is unmarked.

57. Martha BLACKWOOD. She was born on 12 March 1786 and died on 11 March 1829 in Bledsoe Co, Tennessee at age 42.

## Announcing the Time-line Project

Are you one of those people who has a great granny Elizabeth that the family whispered about? You have been digging for years through everything you can find looking for information, explanations, definitions and slowly you start to gather an article here and a clipping there that mentions the word " Melungeon". Starting with the first bit of Melungeon information you find, it becomes increasingly clear that there is something missing. The traditional history that we were taught in school seems to have overlooked some things and, if you are a Melungeon descendant, some pretty important things! Earlier this summer a discussion of the things that were missing and the exciting things that were being found inspired Lisa Savage to suggest an historical timeline which focused on events relevant to the Melungeons and other mixed ethnic people. Several of us began to talk about what we would like to see. We wanted a history but also wanted to trace families and we wanted a research tool so that if someone suspected that a family might be Melungeon or associated with the Melungeons there was a documented frame of reference. We wanted to be able to look at migrations and other changes in light of current events and see how those might impact on the decisions our ancestors made. The more we talked, the clearer it became that this was not a small or short-term undertaking,. We were all, however, very excited about a team project where we would have the support of other people and where we could share the work. To try and set some boundaries to what we were doing we decided to focus on the period from the early exploration of the new world to the present. At this point we have only just begun but while some of us are looking at the early colonies others are following some of the known Melungeon families and others are looking at the geography of Appalachia and how that might have impacted migration. What we wanted to do here was to let people know what we are doing and to invite others to get involved. Just to tease you and to whet your appetite, we are including part of the very beginning of the historical data we have. It's a work in progress and may change. We are working diligently to source and document all material, both historical and genealogical, so keep this in mind. None of us are really sure where this is going to lead

right now but we  
welcome anyone who is interested to talk to any of us and to think about getting involved!

Lisa Savage, Kay Martin, Bill Fields, Sandy Hall, and Patricia Baldwin

## Timeline of Historical Events

- 499** 1. Hwei Schin, A Chinese monk and Buddhist missionary discovers a country he calls "Fusang". It has been speculated that Fusang was actually America. (*Durett, pg 12*)
- 600** 1. Irish monks sail the Atlantic in search of isolated islands where they will be assured of having no contact with women. It is possible that some established monasteries on Greenland. (*Stick, pg.5*)
- 986** 1. Bjarni Herjulfson, while searching for a settlement in Greenland wanders off course and sights the mainland of North America. Bjarni was trying to locate his father in Greenland (Summer of 986) when he drifted off course and ended up in North America. This was the reason that he had no interest in the new land. Fourteen years later Leif Erickson bought Bjarni's ship, hired 35 men and retraced Bjarni in reverse order traveling south. (*Schlesinger, pg. 23 Krensky pg 36-37*)
- 1000** 1. Leif Erkinson explores the east coast of North America. (*Schlesinger, pg. 23*)
- 1170** 1. Madoc, son of Owen Gwynedd of Wales,leaves his country to avoid a struggle of succession between his brothers upon the death of his father. Leaving part of his party behind, he returns to Wales where he recruits ten shiploads of Welch colonists. They leave Wales and are not heard from again. Stories persist in North America of "Welsh Indians" . One talks of an epic battle between "white" newcomers and Native Americans at what is now Louisville. After a massive slaughter, the whites are driven out. It is suggested that the Mandans, many of whom were said to be light featured were the descendants of the survivors and of Madoc's settlements. (*Durett, pg 22, 46-53, 68-69*)
- 1300** 1. During the 14th century the Ottomans came to rule not only Asia Minor, but also much of the Balkans. *Timeline Topic*
- 1418** 1. Portuguese expeditions begin to explore West Coast of Africa. (*The Volume Library - 1994*)
- 1444** 1. The coastal exploration of Africa and the discovery of North and South America by Europeans in the 15th century, and the subsequent colonization of the Americas during the next three centuries, provided the impetus for the modern slave trade. Portugal, lacking in agricultural workers, was the first modern European nation to meet its labor needs by importing slaves. The Portuguese began the practice in 1444; by 1460, they were annually importing 700 to 800 slaves to Portugal from trading posts and forts established on the African coast. These were blacks captured from western Africa. Spain soon followed, but for more than a century Portugal virtually monopolized the African traffic. Throughout the 15th century Arab traders in northern Africa shipped blacks taken from central Africa to markets in Arabia, Iran, and India. (*Microsoft Corporation. Copyright (c) 1993 Funk & Wagnall's Corporation.*)
- 1451** 1. IsabellaI., Spanish Queen, financed Columbus Voyages. He sights the Bahamas October 12, 1492, and establishes the settlement of La Navidad on Hispaniola in December of that year. In following years, colonies are established on Cuba and Santa Domingo and explorations are carried out. (*The Volume Library - 1994. Schlesinger, pg.24- 26*)
- 1493** 1. May. In two Papal bulls, Pope Alexaneder VI grants to Spain all lands not under Christian rule that fall west of a demarcation line 100 leagues west of the Azores. (*Schlesinger, pg. 24*)

- 1494** 1. June 17 Portugal and Spain sign the Treaty of Tordesillas which moves the demarcation line established by the Pope in 1493 to 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. Portugal is given control of all territories east of the line. (*Schlesinger, pg. 25*)
- 1513** 1. April. Juan Ponce de Leon sights Florida. (*Schlesinger, pg. 26*)
- 1516** 1. The successor, Suleiman I, extended Turkish rule over the Balkans, Hungary, Persia, and Arabia. North Africa, too, became part of the huge Ottoman Empire. The Turkish fleet became the most powerful in the Mediterranean. *Timeline Topic*
- 1520** 1. February. Ponce de Leon returns to Florida with 200 men and attempts the first settlement. He is wounded in an attack by natives and the party returns to Cuba where Ponce de Leon dies. (*Schlesinger, pg. 26*)
2. After being taken prisoner by Cortez, Montezuma told his people in a speech "You know I have been 18 years your sovereign and your natural king, as my illustrious predecessors and fathers were before me, and all the descendants of my race since we came from a distant Northern Nation who's tongue and manners we have partly preserved." (*Durett, pg.135*)
- 1526** 1. July. Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon attempts a settlement at the Cape Fear area of North Carolina He arrives on the Pedee River with five to six hundred colonists which include women, children and African slaves. During the first year nearly half the colonists die. Ayllon himself dies from fever. The colony is attacked by natives and the slaves revolt. The colony is abandoned and the survivors return to Hispaniola. (*Stick pg. 19*)
- 1528** 1. April 14. Panfilo de Narvaez lands in Florida with 400 Spanish colonists. They travel north to the village of Apalachee near Tampa looking for gold. Finding none, they set sail for Mexico. on September 22. They are shipwrecked and only two men survive. (*Schlesinger, pg. 26*)
- 1539-43** 1. Hernando DeSoto's explorations. May 28 1539 DeSoto lands in Florida with 600 soldiers. They explore the western half of Florida. In the spring of 1540 they march to the Savannah River and to the Blue Ridge Mountains returning to the Gulf Of Mexico near Mobile. The following year they march north, cross the Mississippi near Memphis and pass west through the Ozarks. They spend the third winter in eastern Oklahoma. They return to the Mississippi where DeSoto falls ill and dies. Louis Moscoso de Alvarado assumes command. They travel west to the upper Brazos River and winter by the Mississippi River near the Arkansas River. The following summer they sail down the Mississippi. (*Schlesinger, pg. 27*)
- 1562** 1. Jean Ribault of France establishes Charlesfort, an outpost on the coast of South Carolina near Port Royal. He leaves 30 men to hold the fort. When Ribault does not return at the appointed time, the men build a boat and leave. They are picked up by an English ship. (*Stick 24-25*)
- 1564** 1. Rene de Laudonniere with 300 men establishes Fort Caroline near present day Jacksonville, Florida. Jean Ribault follows with colonists which include women and children. Soon after the colonists arrive, the Spanish attack. All the French are killed. (*Stick pg 24-25*)
- 1565** 1. Spaniards settle at St. Augustine, Florida. (*The Volume Library - 1994*)
- 1584** 1. July. Phillip Amadas and Arthur Barlow sailing for England arrive at the coast of North Carolina and spend six weeks exploring the outer banks. They make contact with Native Americans, principally a man named Granganimeo, brother of the local *werdancer* or headman, Wingina. They are received at Wingina's village at the north end of Roanoke Island (*Stick pg 36-49*)
- 1585** 1. July Sr. Richard Greenville arrives in North Carolina to establish a fort on Roanoke Island, the first English colony. They erect the fort and leave 107 men under the command of Ralph Lane. During the following year there is increasing conflict with the Native people ending in an attack on the village during which Wingina is killed. (*Stick 80-94, 134-140*)

- 1586** 1. June. Sir Francis Drake arrives at Roanoke Island. The colonists ask that he take them back to England. To make room, Drake leaves behind several hundred Turks, Portuguese Moors, South American Natives and/or Africans which he has liberated from Spanish. They are left with provisions and small boats. The Lane colonists return to England. (*Kennedy 111-113*)
2. July/August. Greenville returns to Roanoke to find Lane and the colony gone. He captures a Native man who tells him of Drakes arrival. Greenville leaves behind a small force of between fifteen and eighteen men. (*Stick 149-14*)
- 1578** 1. July 23. John White arrives at Roanoke Island with approximately 120 people including women and children, to establish a colony. None of the men left by Greenville remain. (*Stick 166-176*)
2. August 18. Virginia Dare, daughter of Ananias and Elanor White Dare and granddaughter of John White is born, the first English child born in North America. (*Stick, 118*)
- 1590** 1. August 18. White returns to the Roanoke Island colony to find it abandoned. The only clue to the whereabouts of the colonists is the word "CROATOAN" carved on one of the posts of the fort. Thus begins the Legend of the Lost Colony of Roanoke. (*Stick 210-211*)
- 1607** 1. First permanent English settlement in North America established at Jamestown, Virginia. (*The Volume Library - 1994*)
- 1619** 1. The first Negroes in the English mainland colonies arrived in Jamestown in the English Colonies of North America the first blacks landed at Jamestown in 1619. Brought by early English privateers, they were subjected to limited servitude, a legalized status of Indian, white, and black servants preceding slavery in most, if not all, the English colonies in the New World. The number of slaves imported was small at first, and it did not seem necessary to define their legal status. Statutory recognition of slavery, however, occurred in Massachusetts in 1641, in Connecticut in 1650, and in Virginia in 1661; these statutes mainly concerned fugitive slaves. (*Timeline Topic*)
- 1624** 1. The first black child born in English North America is christened William in the Church of England at Jamestown. (*Bennett, pg 443*)

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*Timeline Topic* Microsoft (R) Encarta. Copyright (c) 1993 Microsoft Corporation. Copyright (c) 1993 Funk & Wagnall's Corporation.





# Gowen Foundation Research Conference Report

by  
*Bill Fields*

Last May I had the good fortune to be able to spend a day at the Gowen Research Foundation Conference and Family Reunion held in Nashville, Tennessee. All reports I've heard were that the entire conference was a great success. I was only able to be there for the sessions dealing with the Melungeons but those alone were well worth the trip. It was the most interesting few hours I've spent in a long time! Besides all the great information, it was a chance to meet some really fine folks. Best I can tell, I have no Gowen/Goins/Goings ancestors but having been a part of this event, I would not be at all disappointed if one of those great grandmas of mine who, to date have no surnames, turned out to be Goins! Everyone was welcomed as cousins and by the end of the morning it was pretty clear that most of us *were* related, Goins ancestor or not.

There were four speakers and they were all very impressive. I ended up with so much new information that it has been hard to digest it all. Evelyn McKinley Orr, who heads the Gowen Research Foundation's Melungeon Research Team led off the morning. (She has been kind enough to allow The Southeastern Kentucky Melungeon Information Exchange to reprint her speech. It is included in this issue and I encourage everyone to read it.) She talked about her own genealogical research and how that led her to the Melungeons, and from there, the research and discoveries she and the team have made over the past several years.

Jack Harold Goins' presentation was far too short! Jack is one of those fascinating people you can listen to for days and still know that you have not heard all he has to say. He traced several families using census information, tax list, Revolutionary War Pension applications and other documents to show not only the migration of these families but that they had ties that remained through their moves out of North Carolina and Virginia into Tennessee. Since many of the families he spoke of, such as Sizemores, Bowlings, and Mullins, were my own ancestors, I was very much aware that some of them ended up in Kentucky as well! I was especially interested in Jack's comments about the family of Edward "Old Ned" Sizemore of western North Carolina. I have long suspected that this man - and his thousands of descendants - if not actually Melungeon, at least had close ties to them. Jack confirmed this. He also offered evidence for connections of many of these families to the Powhatans.

Ruth Johnson who grew up on Newmans Ridge in Hancock County Tennessee talked about life in her community. The picture she painted of her family was hauntingly familiar to anyone from any rural Appalachian community. Change the place name from Newman's Ridge, Hancock County, Tennessee to Preacher Fork of Hurricane Creek, Leslie County, Kentucky, and she could have been talking about the neighborhood I grew up in and about my family. She left me wondering how, in terms of culture, one can ever separate out what is Appalachian from what is Melungeon - or if maybe what is Appalachian isn't perhaps a lot more Melungeon than we ever thought.

Brent Kennedy was the final speaker. He talked about the new research making links to Turkey for the Melungeons and about how approximately 500 Spanish prisoners taken by Sir Francis Drake in 1587 from a raid on Cartagena and left on Roanoke Island may be part of the Melungeons' roots. These prisoners included "several dozen...South American Indians....several dozen Portuguese soldiers who had been thrown into jail, several dozen West Africans and an estimated 350 to 400 Turks..." The plan was to take these men to Cuba and to outfit them with arms, essentially creating English mercenaries to torment the Spanish. Drake was blown off course and landed on Roanoke where Ralph Lane's forces (the expedition prior to the Lost Colony) demanded to be taken back to England. One hundred of the Turks were in fact taken to England but the rest were left behind. This is not, by the way to say that there was no input to the beginnings of the Melungeons from the settlers at Santa Elena. Rather it is another part of the puzzle, another element to the mix.

Dr. Kennedy also talked in some detail about linguistic evidence for a Turkish connection. Hearing the Turkish words compared to words we are all familiar with, (see the list in Dr. Kennedy's article in this issue) I'm convinced that there are too many to be just chance. While I don't know that I agree with *every* one, I think that it's a mistake to discount this evidence as coincidence. Given the strong evidence that there were Turkish people here, it is very reasonable to assume that Turkish words found their way into Native American languages and from there into English.

Dr. Kennedy also showed a brief clip of some of the filming from Turkey from the Melungeon documentary which is still in production. Filming yet to be completed and there is no final word yet on when it will be released. The final version is expected to be an hour and a half.

I came away from the morning convinced of the Turkish connection, both by Dr. Kennedy and from the research of Evelyn McKinley Orr. It seems clear that there is sufficient evidence supporting the existence of Drake's captives and what happened to them. If 200 or more men from Turkey, South America and Africa were set ashore at Roanoke, with arms, supplies and boats and in a matter of weeks later, were gone, it's not hard to figure out where they went. They had boats...they went to the mainland. And the motivation to get off the island quickly is also evident when you consider that one of the reasons that Ralph Lane's group was so anxious to leave was that in the months just prior, they had increasingly antagonized the local native people and had recently attacked the village, killing one of the principle leaders.

The possible importance of this group and Roanoke Island doesn't end here though. There is a good possibility that the men left could have included Croatian and Bosnian sailors who frequently sailed with the Ottoman navy and who called themselves "*Croatan*". Knowing that, some interesting possibilities as to where, or to whom, the Lost Colony later fled arise.

As I said, this conference was an impressive event. There was a great deal of good information and enough possibilities to ponder for a long time. I'll leave you now thinking about who Virginia Dare's husband *might* have been.....

# THE MYSTERIOUS MELUNJUNS

presented at  
Gowen Research Foundation Reunion  
Nashville, Tennessee, May 6, 1996  
by  
Evelyn McKinley Orr

The subject of the origins of the mysterious Melungeons is very exciting. It is also extremely complicated. The tentacles of their heritage and the heritages of their many descendants today are very extensive. Neither I nor the Gowen Research Foundation declare the origins completely solved. However, so very much has been discovered about Melungeons since the Foundation started the search and especially since 1992 when we joined with Dr. Brent Kennedy's study. Unknown to each other, Dr. Kennedy and our team were simultaneously finding clues that suggested the Mediterranean theory should not be scorned.

Since this is a Gowen Foundation reunion, centered around the Foundation's activities, I will summarize how the Melungeon team came about. Then I'll discuss the mystery of the origins and clarify how we arrived at some of our conclusions to date. At times I will use the original term Indian and Negro with no intent to offend.

The subject of the origins of the Melungeons is also very personal and it generates very strong emotions. There are theories that are strongly defended. And, there were Melungeon researchers who coveted their material and would not share with us.

About ten years ago John and I caught the genealogy bug. When I decided to trace my family tree, I asked myself which ones should I look for first, the nuts, the fruits or the bad apples? Within three years I discovered my Melungeon branch and a hornet's nest would soon appear. Today my Melungeon ancestor has surfaced, as my favorite. The hornet's nest of controversy still exists, but a flower is now blooming on this branch. I believe we are discovering a lost ethnic heritage of a large number of people whose existence in America has been unknown and/or ignored for centuries.

Our Anglo ancestors arrived in America and began their own struggle to form their society. They had no idea who these mysterious people were when they found them here. Nor did they care. Anglos would marry some of these swarthy skinned people especially the pretty girls. As a group they would become determined to own the land and form a society mostly for the benefit of themselves.

It was in the fall of 1989 when I discovered the Melungeons, and found that my ancestor, David Goings, who was born in 1783, might be connected to them. We were in Jonesborough, Tennessee, to research John's family, who were among the First Families of Tennessee. Until then, I had thought my Goings were French. I would never have looked for David's parents as a Free Person of Color or Mulatto in the records. This is a dilemma facing others who may have Melungeon ancestors.

Ann Shaw, a volunteer in the library, asked me if I was researching in Tennessee. I said, "No, but I had traced a Goings ancestor to Gales Co., Virginia." The name Goings set off an alarm and she went to the book case and returned with Jean Patterson Bible's book. I skimmed through it as John continued his research. I was curious, but I doubted that my Frenchman was connected. As Team Chairman, I would hear from Gowens, and others, who very likely were related to Melungeons, but said they couldn't be because their heritage had already been established by their family members long ago.

After leaving Jonesborough, we researched in the McClung library in Knoxville. There I discovered, what I thought to be at that time, a huge file on Melungeons. I began to believe my David's family was connected as I thought back to the physical features of my Goings grandmother, and a few other family members.

But, could traits still show up from only one line so far back? The answer is "Yes." These same questions surface daily in our research.

While at the McClung Library, John engaged in a conversation with a professional registered genealogist about Tennessee Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. So I decided to pick her brains about the mysterious Melungeons. She informed me that I could forget about any mystery. There never was one and these people were a tri-racial mix of Indians, Whites and Negroes, and anything else was pure legend. She went on to tell me that years ago if she traced an ancestor back to the Appalachian Melungeons for a client, she would tell them that she had reached a dead end. The stigma was so negative that she would not inform them they were related to a Melungeon. She was the professional and confidently related her conclusions, I wondered if I should close the door to any further study? After all, no one had been able to prove where the Melungeons came from for more than 100 years, since Will Allen Droomgoole first wrote her evaluation of them in the early 1880's.

Upon returning home to Nebraska I found in my mail a little blue newsletter from Lubbock, Texas, containing an article about the Melungeons. I had no idea from what list this Mr. Arlee Gowen had found my name, but I responded and asked for more information about Melungeons, and sent him references to what I found in the McClung Library. From this Arlee made a guess that I knew something about them. I received a phone call from him. He had sensed that much interest could develop about these people, since some members of the Gowen clan had ancestors with these traits. He wanted to organize a team that would collect Melungeon material and he asked me to chair it.

Arlee sent news releases to libraries and genealogy columns, and we were launched in January of 1990. Interest was high, but most of the responses are from people seeking information from us. We received material from many members. I consider every foundation member who has contributed information to be a team member. Though I wish to give special thanks to four most dedicated members, Arlee Gowen, Ruth Johnson, Jack Goins, and Louise Goins Richardson.

It was through the Foundation that I was able to learn more about some of my David's descendants from Foundation member Hazel Wood, just as the Foundation has helped so many of you find personal information. Hazel had 1939 eyewitness family research that revealed David had sons who looked just

like the old men from Turkey. There was no doubt, David was indeed a Melungeon. At that time the Turkish description was just another name like Black Dutch, French, even Egyptian that families were applying to their swarthy skinned ancestors. More evidence for considering Turkish connections would come later as revealed in my newsletter article, 'Was David Goings Turkish?' And much more is being discovered now by Brent's committee.

Material and queries that came in soon proved that there were varying degrees of similarities between several of the so called mixed blood groups in the south east. Previous researchers have reported over 35 mixed blood groups where the Gowen name appears, as well as appearing early in many Native American Nations and Afro American communities. Many people from these groups are likely connected to the first Melungeons in America. We have Foundation members that are connected to several of the groups.

It is important to note that today the descendants of these groups do not use their earlier group name, with the exception of the Lumbee Indian. In fact, the vast majority of their descendants have rarely, if ever, heard of these terms.

Our search centered around the Melungeon groups of Appalachia who had been befriended by the early Cherokee, encountered by the French traders in the 1600's and discovered by the Germans, and Scots-Irish who came to the New River Valley of Virginia in the mid 1700's. This group generated the most interest among early ethnologists and writers so most of the material we received centered around them. They were very likely the squatters that local history books sometimes referred to as being on the land when the Anglos came. Though many were land owners, especially in early days. Most important, they were the only group called Melungeons.

The mysterious physical and cultural traits showing a Portuguese or Mediterranean heritage continually surfaced. There were quotes from early Tennessee history books, and from explorers such as Seiver, Needum, and Arthur referring to Moorish or Mediterranean heritages. So many similar clues were revealed independently from many earlier ethnologists and researchers that I felt this theory was valid. But how did it happen, and why such a mystery surrounding this heritage .... ?

From this I personally started a novice pursuit of the history of the 14th and 15th century Islamic Arab Berber Moors. Where did they go after the Spanish Inquisition and what about the known early sea exploits of the Portuguese? Ruth Johnson had gathered Tennessee history books and the writings of several Tennessee Melungeons researchers like William Ghrose, Bonnie Ball, and Jean Bible. Copies of Ghrose, Ball and Bible are on film in the LDS library in Salt Lake City, Utah. Ruth would confide with me that she too had suspected some Mediterranean heritage but didn't think anyone would ever take it seriously.

How was this mystery created? To start, no one would believe them when they first called themselves Portuguese or Porthyghee. And, through their traumatic history, events would develop that wiped out their heritage. Later descendants would have no written documentation.

A major situation that probably helped to create the mystery more than any other event in their history was the discriminatory laws and the edicts issued by officials that in effect created two races, the black and the white. As land became scarce, Anglo settlers needed to figure some way to get the productive land. The best way seemed to be to create a social caste system against all the darker skinned citizens.

As early as 1705 the State of Virginia passed a law calling all Indians, mulattos. And a series of laws against dark skin was to follow in many south eastern states. By 1834 North Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee had effectively classified the Melungeons as free persons of color or mulatto. The term FPC or PC may have been created just to deal with the numerous Melungeons.

These laws effectively caused many of the Melungeons to move into the hill country. Yet, it can be argued that these people were at home in the mountains just like their ancestors who had lived in mountainous areas of the Mediterranean, Middle East and South Europe.

It certainly is a mystery why so many Appalachia Melungeons were giving their children first names that originated in these areas if they all were just a 17th century mix of Indians, Anglos and Negroes.

There is the problem of not knowing if the records are accurate and of the lack of records. As family genealogists, we are told to always document the records found. The very first census of 1790 gave evidence that

Many of these people were being recorded erroneously. Inaccurate records may be the core of much of the controversy today. Many free persons of color showed up in the 1790 census where it is questionable that many freed slaves would be located at that time period. Also, in later censuses many Melungeons would be recorded as white in one census and free persons of color or mulatto in another census.

Why did this happen if the records were accurate? A very important point is that in the law and the minds of the record keepers and the society of that time period they were accurate. The census taker or officials of the area would decide what nationality they thought each family was. This had to be a dilemma because not all members of a Melungeon family were always dark complected. For more details you may refer to my article in the September 1995 newsletter.

Another point to consider, regarding records, is that we may be dealing with a time period in history, the very early 1500's, when records were not available. Not everything that happened was recorded, especially for the common folk.

Regarding the origin of the name Melungeons, the French settlers may or may not have called the Appalachian Melungeons this name. But, there is no evidence that the term was derived from the French word Melange as so often surmised by early authors. Recent discoveries indicate that some of the first Melungeons in America likely called themselves Melunjuns. And, some used mulungo or melango the Afro-Portuguese words meaning shipmate or companion as first suggested by Bonnie Ball and Jean Bible.

The Portuguese embassy acknowledged that East Africans referred to the first Portuguese they saw as mulangos or melungo, meaning white persons. Today the name is pronounced melunshawn by many Portuguese. Portuguese verification has come from Portuguese sources through the help of members of Brent's committee. Specifically Mr. Manuel Mira, a Foundation member and currently vice chairman of the Portuguese American society who is in our audience.

Manuel will be traveling to Portugal and Spain this summer. He will be verifying some of his recent theories concerning connections between the early 1500's Turk and Portuguese sea exploits that took place before the Pardo expeditions. He found a study of Portuguese music. As late as 1970 the Portuguese were singing a ballad about the battle of Le Panto in which the Turks were involved.

In 1915 there was the court case of the "State of North Carolina vs Goins families of South Carolina". The Goins families were applying for admittance to the Indian school in North Carolina. No evidence surfaced to prove that they were not Indian so they were admitted. From descriptions in the document, we would today assume they were Redbones. The most revealing testimony was the fact that the North Carolina Lumbee Indians called themselves Melungeans prior to being given the name Croatian Indian in 1885.

Today, Turkish scholars have verified that the name Melunjun was applied and used freely by early

Ottoman Turkish sailors. The modern Turkish people recognize this term which meant cursed soul or abandoned by God. How ironic in view of the traumatic history of the Melungeons in America. Also, Spanish Historian, Eloy Gallegoes, found the name in early Spanish Folk songs.

It is also ironic that these first Melunjuns in America called themselves this name, then apparently lost this heritage. In the 1800's the name would surface as a hated term for descendants living in the Appalachians. Why was the name resurrected for this particular group? Perhaps the name never did completely die out, and the term was picked up by those who wished to discriminate against them?

An important Portuguese discovery was that in the 1500's some of the Portuguese called themselves the name Portyghee, not Portuguese. This same term was used by early Tennessee Melungeons to define themselves. Also, early Portuguese immigrants in every English speaking country were called Portyghee. (Manuel Mira)

The 1990 genetics studies done by Dr. James Guthuri is most revealing. This study done on a group of Hancock County, Tennessee, Melungeons, proved that this group of Appalachian Melungeons had remained quite isolated, and indeed people holding the same major genetic genes today reside in areas of Turkey, Morocco, the Middle East, the Mediterranean or southern Europe. The Tennessee Melungeons appear to have remained much like the very first Melungeons in appearance and culture traits. (*Tennessee Anthropologist Magazine*, Spring 1990.)

In the 15th century, after the Spanish Christians conquered the Moors, some of these Moslems of Arab, Berber, and Mediterranean descent were allowed to stay for over 100 years in north Spain. Some became Christians. Then between 1609 and 1614 King Philip decided to expel them. By this time Moorish genes and culture traits were left in the Spanish society.

Some of the expelled Moors were accepted by the Christian Huguenots in France and several decades later many came to South Carolina in the 1680's as French Huguenots. Many Huguenots had dark skin. (research of Robert Goynes, Australia) The name Goin was listed in Rupps Huguenot book of immigrants. Today, descendants who trace back to the Carolina Huguenots, thinking they are French, may in reality share the genes of early Melungeons.

From the time of the 1492 Inquisition these dark complected Caucasian Islamic people were considered marauding barbarians by most emerging Christian nations. They migrated anywhere they could be accepted. They did not call themselves Moors, and often claimed to be Portuguese or Porthghee in hopes of better acceptance.

An important discovery by modern Turkish scholars was that the term "Turks" was a universal generic term given all the Islamic marauders by the emerging Christian nations during the reign of the Ottoman Turks. Turkish scholars have long felt there were many similarities between the early Turks and our Native Americans. And more exciting discoveries are revealing the similarities between these cultures and the Melungeons type groups in America.

Eloy Gallegoes, and archaeologist, Dr. Chester De Pratter, have uncovered evidence that the Melungeons may have been survivors of the Juan Pardo, Santa Elena Colony of families. There were similar surnames and cultural traits among the colonists and the Melungeons of Appalachia. Pardo himself was of Portuguese heritage. His signature of "JOAO" is Portuguese for the Spanish "JUAN." This fact has been ignored by early historians. He and those with him were from North Spain, the area that some of the descendants of the defeated Moors were living. Pardo had also established forts, manned by soldiers for as long as two years at a time. These forts were located in the Appalachians, remarkably close to the area the Melungeons would be found over two centuries later.

In 1586 Sir Francis Drake liberated galley slaves from the Spanish and then visited Roanoke Island to visit the first English Colony. He was met **with** a request from the colonists to take them back to

England. So what should Drake do with the several hundred liberated slaves of various nationalities, which included women.

English historian, David Quinn Beers, is an author of several books on early English Colonies in America. He mentions the possibility of some of Drake's slaves being left on Roanoke Island. Beers discusses this subject in depth in his nine page article, "Turks, Moors, Blacks and Others in Drake's West Indian Voyage," in the, *Terrae Incognitae Journal for History of Discoveries*, (Vol. MN, 1982, Wayne State University Press.)

Any liberated people would disappear inland in the small boats abandoned by the Englishmen. As they feared Spanish ships would spot them. Thus, a reason for no evidence of them being found by later English ships which landed at Roanoke.

Spanish historian, David J. Weber, Professor of History at Southern Methodist University, author of the book, "The Spanish Frontier in North America," states reasons to believe Drake's slaves may have been left on Roanoke Island.

James H. Guill, Azorian Historian, specializes in Portuguese history. In his 1993 book, "Azores Islands, a History," he mentions two incidents where ship loads of settlers, each with up to 200 people on board were headed to the Azores and did not arrive. After 1432 Portugal began the long process of populating these islands with settlers. These two ships are thought to have not turned north in time and winds may have taken them westward to the North Carolina shores. Could the turbulent gulf currents off Cape Hatteras have claimed them with the survivors being a source for Melungeons? Guill believes so. Nationalities among these settlers were Portuguese or Mediterranean types.

The surnames Goios, Goiss, Gomes, and Goyanes are among Azoran names that could fit into the Gowen family. In the early 1950's Dr. Guill visited the Sneedville, Tennessee, area and came to the conclusion that the Melungeons of that area could possibly have descended from these lost ships when making the difficult voyages to the Azores Islands. Dr. Guill has offered me his cooperation in our search.

There is documented evidence that people with original Melungeon genes did come to the Colonies. Some of this documentation concerns a later wave of immigrants.

In 1790 South Carolina recognized that there were Moors living in the state. For in that year the House of Representatives in South Carolina passed a law that provided for "All sundry Moors subjects of the Emperor of Morocco were to be tried in court according to the laws of South Carolina citizens and not under Negro codes."

The 1792 statute, VI 43 1, South Carolina law states: "To prohibit the importation or bringing in of Negro slaves, Mulattoes, Indians, Moors, or Mustizoes bound for a term of two years from any of the United States by land or water."

A French document in Morocco, dated 20 December 1777, gave de facto recognition to the newly declared independent United States of America and granted free passage to all American ships. It would seem logical that passengers from Morocco would soon go to America. In 1787, Morocco, the country where a large number of defeated Moors fled in 1492, was the first country to officially recognize the Independence of the United States. A signed friendship treaty was ratified by our congress.

One group that likely originated from this act of friendship were the Turks of Sumter county South Carolina, who are remarkably similar to the Appalachian Melungeons. Two men from this isolated group became the faithful followers of General Sumter throughout the Revolutionary War. One named Ben Ali married a girl named Oxidine, a major neighboring Lumbee Indian name. General Sumter would defend Ben Ali and his people's claims to be Turks from Morocco. Yet, their claim fell on deaf ears

just as the Tennessee Melungeon Portyghee claims did. The Goins surname was found among these Turks though it was not a prominent name.

At this time we speculate that all these events are important evidence that Melungeons were possibly in America by the early 1500's. As the decades and centuries rolled by various families or individuals would intermix with various nationalities and races. And the degree of the mixing would vary. Laws would be passed which would affect how they mixed.

We cannot establish a one parent heritage for all Melungeons as we do with our Scottish, German and English ancestors. Ironically the descendants of Melungeons are found in almost every nationality in America today.

Descendants will appear in families who are Native American today. They are found in some families who are Black African American. Many of them melted into the Anglo community. What is amazing is the fact that all across America some are found who still look much like the modern day descendants of the majority of Mulungos or Melunjuns who remained in the Mediterranean and Middle East before 1500.

As the fascinating story of these "Cursed Souls" unfolds, more family genealogists are becoming aware of them. There may be hundreds, maybe thousands who may be related and who have never heard of their particular Melungeons type group. I credit Arlee Gowen and Brent Kennedy for being the moving force that has brought these early Melunjuns out of the closet. They have promoted interest among the scholars and many family researchers.

I started a simple genealogy search for my Goings ancestors. The search developed into my joining many other researchers in a major study of Ethnology, Linguistics, Medicine, Genetics, Archeology, Anthropology, and History. As well as genealogy.

The goal of the search was never a quest to prove the Melungeon groups were or were not a particular ethnic heritage. It has been an exciting journey as we do appear to be uncovering an entire ethnic heritage, lost in the American melting pot. As Brent Kennedy's mother so aptly put it, "It was like hearing cries from the grave and then deciding whether to answer them." We are trying to answer them.

I am confident that the search to solve the mystery will continue.



## Gowen Research Foundation's New World Wide Web Site

The Melungeons have a new homeland....in cyberspace

"Melungia, the Land of the Melungeons" now on the internet is composed of articles written about this mysterious race of swarthy people who populated Appalachia during



the colonial period of America. This feature is being made available for browsing and downloading on the new web site of Gowen Research Foundation, a non-profit heritage society.

The foundation has pioneered in the research of the enigma of the origin of the dark-complected people who claimed Portuguese ancestry. A Melungeon research team is investigating DNA similarities and genetic similitudes with the people of the Mediterranean area, including Spain, Portugal, North Africa, Turkey, Sephardic Jews, the Moors and other suggested ancestors.

A pool of Melungeon authorities, including Dr. N. Brent Kennedy, Vice-Chancellor of Clinch Valley College of the University of Virginia, Evelyn McKinley Orr, Omaha NE, Jack Harold Goins, Rogersville TN, James R. Callahan, Nashville IN, Dr. William Mcreau Goins, Detroit MI, Donna Gowen Johnson. Casper WY, Ruth Johnson, Kingsport TN, Louise Goins Richardson, Paragould, AR, Dr. Fernanda Rodrigues, Suffolk University, Boston and others compose the foundation's Melungeon Research Team. Additionally Dr. Kennedy, Author of "**The Melungeons: the Resurrection of a Proud People**" is the head of the Melungeon Documentary Film Team which is currently filming in Turkey.

Another feature of the Foundation's home page is the Foundation Manuscript, 10.000 pages of family data on the surname in 46 different spelling variations. Also included in the web site initially is all the editions of the Foundation Newsletter published since 1989 and "Dear Cousins" and query and message center.

Researchers who log onto the site may utilize its search program to find their ancestors in these four initial sections of the new Internet Electronic Library. A Boolean search may be made for their ancestors, specified by name, geographic location or time period.

After entering his password, a member may browse or download from the holdings of the library, including its "closed stacks". All researchers are invited to utilize its open files and its search routine. The web site is accessed at "<http://www.llano.net/gowen>." Online e-mail inquiries may be addressed to "[gowen@llano.net](mailto:gowen@llano.net)."

The non-profit Foundation was organized in 1989 with a grant from Miller A. Gowen of Geneva, Switzerland, and its membership has now spread across the United States and Canada. Additionally it has overseas members in Europe, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand who are researching the Gowen surname. Memberships in the foundation begin at \$15 a year. Membership banks and additional information may be downloaded from the web site or requested from Gowen Research Foundation, 5708 Gary Avenue, Lubbock, Texas, 79413-4822, 806-795-8758, Fax 806-795-9694.

# Melungeon Surnames compared with the Eastern Cherokee Roll Book; Volume I

(Part One)

*Transcribed by: Patricia A. Hopkins Baldwin*

*As per N. Brent Kennedy's most common Melungeon Surnames mentioned in his book.*

*THE MELUNGEONS*

*The Resurrection of a Proud People:*

*An Untold Story of Ethnic Cleansing in America*

## RESERVATION ROLL

A listing of those desiring a 640 acre tract of land in the East, in lieu of removing to Arkansas. Upon the death of the reservee, or the abandonment of the property, title was to revert to the state.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Reservation</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Reservation</u>
Barnes William	"	Fields David	"
Collins Parker	"	" George	"
Carter Alexander	"	" George Sr.	"
Davis Abraham	"	Kennedy John	"
" Daniel	"	Ore James	"
" Thomas	"	Perry Hannah	"

## Emigration Rolls 1817-1835

Those who filed to emigrate to Arkansas country and after 1828, to Oklahoma.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Roll Numbe</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Roll Numbe</u>
Berry Robert	"	Fields Charles	"
Biggs Dennis	"	" James	"
Boling Archibald	"	" John	"
" Charles	"	" Polly	"
" Darcus	"	" Robert	"
" Edwin	"	" Thomas	"
" Herman	"	" Turtle	"
" Ruth	"	Freeman George	"
" Sally	"	Gowan Jacob P.	"
" Wm. M.	"	Hall John C.	"
Carter Alaxander	"	Hammon Jane	"
Carter David	"	Hill Thomas	"
" Nancy	"	Perry Robert	"
" Wilson	"	Shephard Elizabeth	"
Coffy ?	"	" John	"
Davis Abram	"	Watts John	"
" James	"	" Mink	"
" Joseph	"	Wright Eli	"
Fields Ann	"	" John	"

## Henderson Roll 1835

A census of over 16,000 Cherokee residing in Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina to be removed to Oklahoma under the treaty of New Echota. (1835).

<u>Name</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>State</u>
Barnes Thomas	TN.	Fields Big	TN.
Berry Robert	GA.	" Arch	GA.
Carter David	AL.	" Ezekial	TN.
Coffee ?	AL.	" G.	TN.
" ?	TN.	" George	AL.
Davis ?	GA.	" George	TN.
" Daniel	GA.	" Jack	TN.
" Isaac	NC.	" John	GA.
" John	NC.	" John Sr.	GA.
" Martin	GA.	" Johnson	GA.
" Wm. Dr.	GA.	" Moses	TN.
Day Moon	GA.	" Richard	AL.

<u>Name</u>	<u>State</u>	Henderson Roll 1835	con't	<u>State</u>
		<u>Name</u>		

Field Rider	AL.	Keith John	GA.
" Turtle	AL.	Orr James	AL.(Mill Creek)
" Willis	TN.	Perry Liddy	GA.
Gann Catherine	GA.	" Robin	GA
Goins Betsy	TN.	Watts Captain	TN.
Hopkins D.B.	TN.	" Mink	TN.

#### Mullay Roll 1848

This was a census of 1,517 Cherokee people remaining in North Carolina after the removal of 1838 (year). John C. Mullay took the census pursuant to an act of congress in 1848.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Roll Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Roll Number</u>
Davis Ah Kil		Davis Kal On	
" To Hee	468	" A Hes Kah	157
" Betsey	996	" Kootuh	155
" Esther	997	" Liddy	158
" Isaac	154		

#### Siler Roll 1851

A listing of some 1700 Eastern Cherokee entitled to a per capita payment pursuant an act of Congress in 1850.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Roll Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Roll Number</u>
Carter Andrew	P 178	Carter Marion	P 178
" Andrew	"	" Martha	"
" Berry	"	" "	"
" Berry	"	" Mary	"
" Caroline	"	" "	"
" Caroline	"	" Matthew	"
" Eleanor	"	" "	"
" Eleanor	"	" Mix.	"
" Elizabeth.	"	" "	"
" Elizabeth.	"	" Nancy	"
" Fred	"	" "	"
" Fred	"	" Nelson	"
" Harriet	"	" "	"
" Harriet	"	" Rebecca	"
" Henry	"	" "	"
" Henry	"	" Susan	"
" Jackson	"	" "	"
" Jackson	"	" Thompson	"
" James	"	" "	"
" James	"	" William	"
" Jesse	"	" "	"
" John	"	" "	"
" John	"	" "	"
" Margaret	"	" "	"
" Margaret	"	" "	"
" "	"	" "	"
" "	"	" "	"
" Marion	"		

\*Note\* On the Carters:this is how their names as listed.dubled,sometimes tripled,all listed with the Siler Roll number--P178.

#### Siler Roll 1851 con't

<u>Name</u>	<u>Roll Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Roll Number</u>
Collins Ira Jackson	1703	Davis Daniel	1932
" John Parker	1702	" "	1883
" Joseph	1699	" Delilah	1885
" Martha	1700	" "	1955
" Parker	1698	" Eliza	1556
" Susan Alice	1701	" Eliza Ann	1562
Davis Amanda	1887	" Elizabeth	1256
" Cho Co He	20	" Eneanor	1567
" Cho Nih	149	" George	1640
" Coleman	1886	" Isaac	17
" Coo Ti Yeh	18	" James	1557
" Cynthia	1563	" Jane	1892

#### Siler Roll 1851 con't

<u>Name</u>	<u>Roll Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Roll Number</u>
Davis Jane	1564	Fields Riely	P180
" John	P186	" "	P189
" "	P186	" "	P189
" "	1895	" Sarah	P180
" "	1639	" "	P180
" "	146	" Seifeffa	P180
" "	24	" "	P180
" Joseph	1934	" Valentine	P180

" Joseph C.	AC	"	"	P180
" Lafayette	1565	"	Willis	1583
" Lorenzo Dow	1931	Gibson	John	P179
" Martin	1891	"	"	P179
" Mary	1894	"	John C.	P179
" Nancy	1555	"	"	P179
" Nelly	1561	"	Margaret	P179
" Newton	1558	"	"	P179
" Qua Lih	148	"	Marilda	P177
" Rachel	1893	"	"	P177
" Samuel	1641	"	Morning	P179
" Sarah Ann	1560	"	"	P179
" Stacy	19	"	Nancy	P177
" Taw Nee	23	"	"	P177
" Thomas	1257	"	Savina	P179
" Ut Te Sa It	147	"	"	P179
" Wee Lee Ta	no num.	"	Soloman S.	P179
" Wee See	21	"	"	P179
" Wee Loo Stee	22	"	William E.	P179
" Wesley	1559	"	"	P179
" William	1884	Perry	Eliza I.	P184
" "	1566	"	"	P184
Evans Elizabeth	P185	"	Florence	P184
" "	P185	"	"	P184
Fields Cassanna	P180	"	Hannah A.	P184
" "	P180	"	"	P184
" Cornelius	1584	"	Lexan	P184
" James	P180	"	"	P184
" "	P180	"	Olin	P184
" John	P180	"	"	P184
" "	P180	"	Rudolph L.	P184
" "	AC	"	"	P184
" "	1587	"	Silas A.	P184
" Lydia Jane	AC	"	"	P184
" Martin	P180	"	Susan J.	P184
" "	P180	"	"	P184
" Mary	P180	"	Rachel M.	P184
" "	P180	"	"	P184
" "	1585	"	Catherine	1866
" Rhoda	P180	"	Priestly	1864
" "	P180	"	Sarah	1867
" Richard	1586	"	Susan Jane	1865
" Riely	P180	Wright	Salley	AC

\*note\* These names were copied exactly as listed by the rolls. Notice that many of the names are doubled.

#### Chapman Roll 1852

Prepared by Albert Chapman as a listing of those Cherokee actually receiving payment based on the Siler census.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Roll Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Roll Number</u>
Collins Ira Jackson	1813	Davis Daniel	2073
" Jonathan Parker	1812	" "	2024
" Joseph	1809	" Delilah	2074
" Martha	1810	" "	2026
" Parker	180	" Eleanor	1616
" Susan Alice	1811	" Eliza	1610
Davis Amanda	2028	" Eliza Ann	1617
" Cho Co He	20	" Elizabeth	1294
" Cho Nih	149	" George Ann	1750
" Coleman	2027	" Isaac	17
" Coo Ti Yeh	18	" James	1611
" Cynthia	1618	" Jane	2033

#### Chapman Roll 1852 con't

<u>Name</u>	<u>Roll Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Roll Number</u>
Davis Jane	1619	Davis Wee Loo Stee	22
" John	1275	" Wesley	1613
" "	2036	" William	2025
" "	1749	Fields Cornelius	1638
" "	146	" John	1641
" "	24	" Mary	1639
" Joseph	2075	" Richard	1640
" Lafayette	1620	" Willis	1637
" Lorenzo Dow	2072	Perry Eliza I.	1981
" Martin	2032	" Florence C.	1983
" Mary	2035	" Hannah A.	1979
" Nancy	1609	" Hexan C.	1984

"	Nelly	1615	"	Oliver V.	1980
"	Newton	1612	"	Rodolph L.	1978
"	Quatin	148	"	Silas A.	1982
"	Rachel	2034	"	Sussan I.	1977
"	Sarah Ann	1614	William		324
"	Smauel	1751	"	Barilla	1992
"	Stacy	19	"	Lowry	1991
"	Tau Nee	23	Willis	Catharine	2007
"	Thomas	1295	"	Priestly	2005
"	Ut Te Sa It	147	"	Sarah	2008
"	Wee Lee Tee	0	"	Susan Jane	2006
"	Wee See	21			

For more information on the names listed in Volumn I: Eastern Cherokee Rolls--Cherokee Roots; please refer to the following address:

CHEROKEE NAMES AND FACTS  
 PO BOX 525  
 CHEROKEE, N.C.  
 PH.# 704-497-9709

This is a research service with more detailed information on the name you would like searched. There is a \$30.00 fee per person & number on the roll.

Credits:  
 Bob Blankenship; author of Cherokee Roots, Volumns I & II.

(Part 2 will continue in issue #4)



## Melungeon Registry

*The following exciting bit of information came from the Gowen Foundation web site at <http://www.llano.net/gowen>.*

The Wise County Historical Society seeks to collect the heritage and history of all persons of Melungeon descent. No history or genealogy of the Appalachian Mountains would be complete without the Melungeons. Therefore, each issue of the quarterly will deal with Melungeon ancestry. The magazine will carry articles on the topics of linguistics, genetically transmitted diseases and history. Attention will be devoted to the history of the Spanish settlements in Florida, the Moors, the Turks and their settlements."

Dr. Brent Kennedy wrote,

"The Melungeon Registry is an enrollment archive to register Melungeon descendants and provide a site for coordinating related family research activities. While the Registry requires at least one probable Melungeon ancestor for membership, the true intent is to unify registrants in community, civic, social professional and spiritual areas as opposed to a purely physical sense.

The Registry is not meant to be, nor will it be permitted to become, an exclusive club which will blatantly, subtly or unfairly exclude others or excommunicate in an air of pre-seumed ethnic or racial superiority.

Melungeon descendants can be found among all races and ethnic groups and all descendants are invited to seek enrollment with the Registry. All descendants of enrolled members are automatically eligible for enrollment."

Melungeon descendants are invited to register their Melungeon ancestors. The society charges \$10 for

registration or \$20 for the registration and a subscription to "The Appalachian Quarterly." For details and registration forms, contact The Wise County Historical Society, Box 368, Wise, VA, 24293

## LETTERS

*There have been a lot of letters since the last issue and a lot of material to try and fit in here so I have had to limit the number this time. Some of the ones I had to put aside may show up in later issues. I also edited out some material from which was not directly related to Melungeons.*

### **Archie A. Collins:**

My great great grandfather John Gilbert Collins born about 1807 in Tennessee and later moved into Kentucky, into the Perry and Clay County area. My Dad was born in Clay County. The older Collins people came from around the Sneedville area and we believe are of Melungeon descent. We believe that James Collins was a brother of John Gilbert Collins but are having difficulty pinning down definite information.....

### **Verna E Sullivan:**

...David Goings, along with his family, went back to Indiana about 1830, but went back to Virginia in 1840 and died there . His family remained in Indiana and later generations moved to Missouri, Illinois and Kansas.

In an letter written around 1930, a grandson of David Goins said :

"My father enjoyed telling us he was a "Tuck-a-ho", that being the nickname for native Turks. He often said his father was born in Turkey, but could never explain why we have an English name. My explanation is, that as the African negro took the name of the man who bought his as a slave, so the Turk with the unspeakable name took the name of some English family he may have lived with. My notion is that grandfather Goings was not a native Turk, his ancestors having been in America a generation or more; but my father and Uncle David had so many features of the old men of Turkey as we see them in pictures."

In March of this year I had the good fortune to make the trip to Turkey with Brent Kennedy and a group of other (probable) Melungeons. It was a wonderful adventure, but did not include any genealogical research.....

(Verna also included an ancestor chart showing her descent from David Goings born September 15, 1783 in VA)

### **Mary Jo Schulte:**

.....I am really searching for information on my great grandparents. They were James (Jim "Crack") Bowling born in 1866 (where is not known). He married Sally (Sallie) Sizemore born in 1870 but again whereabouts unknown.

She always wore Indian necklace and earrings and was very dark skinned from her pictures. Someone thought she was a full blooded Cherokee that James married and brought to Bull Creek in Leslie County, Kentucky, where they raised their children until they died. They are buried in a small cemetery at Bull Creek, Kentucky (Leslie Co.).....

In another letter, Mary Jo continues:

...She (Sally Sizemore Bowling) had a brother they called Buddy "Apple Orchard". They lived at Bullsken and are found in the 1900 and 1910 Leslie County KY census but I think they came from somewhere else. Sally looks just like a full blooded Cherokee and even wore Indian jewelry in her pictures. We called her "Black Ma" because she was so dark skinned.....

**Kay Arnett Phipps:**

...I have been trying to get information on Melungeons for the past couple of years since discovering some family history that strongly indicated that we are part Melungeon through our great grandmother who always claimed to be Black Dutch. Our family came to eastern Kentucky in the early 1790s through the 1820s from the western parts of Virginia and North Carolina....

**Velma Moser:**

".... was born in Knott County, Kentucky, my father Arnold Collins, in Letcher County and my mother, Emogene Short in Knott County. On the Collins side we have Gibsons with my great grandfather Joseph Gibson being (I have been told all these years) a full blooded Cherokee. On my mother's side we have Shorts. After reading your article I begin to wonder if there may be some Melungeons in my history. One of the primary reasons was the mention of medical conditions. My father has a rare disease, Myasthenia Gravis, and I have fibromyolitis that is also a muscular disease. My father and one brother have the curved teeth. I am really confused and would like to know more. I have one uncle who will talk about the possibility of mixed blood but says his memory isn't as good as my dad's, who is unwilling to talk about this subject.....

☆?☆?☆?☆ QUERIES ☆?☆?☆?☆

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**GOINS/PURVINE** Seeking information about family of Jessica GOINS who married William PURVINE in eastern Tennessee about 1796 and raised a family of eight children "near Chattanooga".

Nancy Caroline FIELDS. I have no information other than she married Irandell Camuel WYATT. They lived in Clay County Kentucky. She was born about 1885.

**FIELDS/WYATT** Looking for information on

**DALLAS/CLAXTON** Seeking information on:

1) William A. DALLAS born about 1850 possibly in Clermont County, Ohio. Married Clara Belle DUCHEMIN. One child, Francis W. DALLAS

2) John D. CLAXTON born about 1895 in Lafolette, Tennessee. Married, common law, Maude COLLINS, 1918 or 1919. One child, Nellie Mae CLAXTON, born February 13, 1920.

**COLLINS** I am seeking the parents of Archibald COLLINS. On various census records he claimed to have born in Virginia ca. 1800. He was in Clay County Kentucky as early as 1845 when he was the bondsman for his daughter Mary Eliza's marriage to Hugh BURNS. (Hugh's grandfather William BURNS had been born in Virginia, migrated to North Carolina and then to Clay County, KY by 1807) Since Mary Eliza claimed to have been born in Kentucky, Archibald was probably there as early as 1830. He appears on the

Clay County Tax lists beginning in 1836. Other than the fact that her first name was Margaret, I have no information on his wife. By 1860 they had migrated to Roane Co. West Virginia along with their daughter Mary Eliza and her husband. Other listed children in the Collins family were John, Washington, Malinda, Eunice and Nimbury. I can find no trace of Archibald or his wife after the 1860 census. Various lines coming down from Hugh BURNS have family traditions that Hugh's wife was "part Indian" but no one I have had contact with has any information on Mary Eliza's parents other than the above.

***Note: In this on-line version the addresses have been removed from the Queries and some other section as they are old and possibly out of date. The mailing list has also been removed***