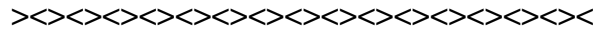


# AMERICAN INDIAN

# MELUNGEON

**Edited by Karlton Douglas**



**NOTICE:**

You have permission to print this book for personal use only, and you are welcome to link to this site. You do not have the right to sell, make copies to distribute, or otherwise commercially use this book to promote, or make any money from it. Everything else falls under copyright protection. © 2002

## DONATION REQUEST:

**This book was started as a way to raise funds to support Melungeon projects. It is being made available free of charge. I will let you be the judge, but I think you will find these many articles both informative and useful. You can show your appreciation by sending a donation in any amount to:**

**V.C.H.S.  
P.O. BOX 554  
SNEEDVILLE, TN 37869**

Their Website: <http://hometown.aol.com/vardyvalley/>

Donations.....	2
Preface .....	3
Examining Melungeon History .....	5
A Search .....	9
Remnant Indians .....	12
Final Thoughts .....	19
Main Sources .....	20
Racial Realities .....	20
About Mediterranean People.....	22
Closing Remarks .....	24
Visit to the Melungeons.....	26
The Powhatan Remnants .....	30
The First European Settlements .....	31
The Spanish and the Powhatan .....	32
Virginia Tide Water Indians .....	33
The Founder of the Powhatan Empire .....	34
Jamestown .....	34
Sold into Slavery .....	36
Chief Powhatan - Wahunsonacook 1550s-1618.....	38
The Powhatan Reservation .....	39
Our Melungeon Forefathers.....	39
Melungeon Memories.....	43
Blackfoot .....	47
Barbados and Melungeons.....	52
Melungeon Mystery.....	58
A New Path.....	63

## PREFACE

This book is specifically aimed at trying to identify the American Indian tribes that may be involved in Melungeon families. From historic times Melungeon people have claimed to be, at least in part, American Indians. Seldom was there anything definite about the tribe or tribes involved. Many claimed to be Cherokee, or simply said they were Indian, without a definite tribe.

What I hope this book will do is give an overview of the possible tribes Melungeons descend from, show some of the ethnic mixing that happened, and relate family stories and traditions about Indian heritage.

Each writer—including myself—is responsible for his or her own work, the accuracy, speculations, etc.... I have tried to get as broad a view, and include as many likely tribes as possible to present in this book. Some writers do not agree with each other—I have welcomed that disagreement, I have not silenced any reasonable point of view. Diversity is what Melungeons are all about, and personally, my guess is that no one point of view will apply to all Melungeon descendants, everyone has their own story. My hope is that this information will be used as a catalyst to cause further searches into the American Indian element in Melungeon lines.

My own involvement in this process began very early as I have had a lifelong interest in American Indians. I have American Indian heritage on my father's side of the family, and likely Melungeon on my mother's side of the family. It was only a few years ago that I first heard the word Melungeon. That stirred my interest and caught my attention. When I learned something of the history of Melungeons my interest only deepened, as I grew increasingly confident that my maternal grandmother's family was very likely Melungeons.

My interest in Appalachia is not just an academic one. I was partially raised in Appalachia, spending many of my summers there while growing up, and making many visits there long afterward. My Grandmother Mary (Branam) Hutchinson's house was where I added to my knowledge of Appalachia. Nestled right between two mountains of the Cumberland Plateau in northeast Tennessee I received a good taste of southern Appalachia. Going from the Industrial Midwest to those mountains of the south was a bit like going into some time machine and stepping into an earlier era. Gone was indoor plumbing, hot running water, drinking water from the tap. In its place were deadly snakes to watch out for, heating with a coal stove, and lye soap. But also there was the best drinking water I have ever tasted, as well as the cleanest air, and a pace of life so slow as to be standing still. Mountains on a July summer night lit up with fireflies appearing for the entire world like some great Christmas tree. There were stories, folklore, and words more commonly used in Shakespeare's time than today. Consider a favorite word of my grandmother's for a "no good", or drunk: SOT. This word was used in exactly the same way by Shakespeare in five of his plays: Comedy of Errors, King Lear, Merry Wives of Windsor, Tempest, and Twelfth Night. Sot was a word I have only heard used by my grandmother, though still found in some English dictionaries, I suspect use of the word was much more common in past centuries. Another favorite word she used was BLAGGARD, or BLACKGUARD, meaning: the worst kind of person. This word is found in many of the Classic works of literature, notably by Mark Twain in Niagara, he uses the word there exactly as my grandmother did—Blaggard. Finally two other words of note were KYARNEY, which was a word for laziness, and may be an Irish word; I have been told that Irish families that immigrated to New York also used this word. The other word of note is RIGMAROLE, pronounced RIGAMAROW by my grandmother. I have never heard anyone other than my grandmother use this word, though Rigmarole is still found in English dictionaries. I found the word used by Edgar Allan Poe in three of his works, I suspect this word was much more popular in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

I would also mention the bit of folklore that I learned from my grandmother, such as A Snake Does Not Really Die Until Sundown. This was believed even if you had chopped the thing into twenty pieces. If A Bird Flies Into Your House Someone In Your Family Is Going To Die. It was believed, though I can't say I ever saw any results to that one either. Drinking Milk While Eating Fish Will Make You Sick. Sort of makes me sick to think of it. Don't Let A Frog Pee On You Or You Will Get Warts. No interest in finding out about that one. Steal And Bury Your Neighbor's Dishrag To Rid Yourself Of Warts. I wonder if that one works? And Finally: If A Dying Snake Eats Snakeberries (they look like miniature strawberries) It Will Live. I can only imagine there were hundreds of ideas like these in the last century in Appalachia. It is probably a miracle that so many have survived for so long, and I suspect that other folklore exists in isolated pockets of Appalachia.

I have tried to give the reader an idea of what influences stirred me to get involved in the Melungeon Movement. Appalachia is a big part of who Melungeons are. I have no expertise except for a lifelong interest in American Indians, my own experiences in Appalachia, and traditions handed down to me by my family members. I am the moderator for the Melungeon and Metis Christians at Yahoogroups. I brought forth the idea for The Melungeon Statement, an attempt to define Melungeons by bringing together Melungeon descendants with various ideas about what, and who Melungeons were/are. I am an author of two books, and I have had articles published in the Appalachian Quarterly magazine, and on web sites and E-zines. But this section is not about me; it is about attempting to discover the source of American Indian input in Melungeon lines. And I have gathered some very good people together to aid in that mission. I hope you will find the following information useful and that it will stir you on the quest of finding your own Melungeon Ancestors.

Karlton Douglas July 2002

## **EXAMINING MELUNGEON HISTORY AND GENEALOGY**

By: JACK GOINS

Having the advantage of living in and near the homeland of the Melungeons has helped me considerably in my search for the true history of the Melungeons and their kinfolks. I first became interested in the Melungeons when told that some authors and historians listed two of my Great Grandparents as Melungeon. My Grandfather Goins denied these allegations and personally told me "My grandma Minor was about 3/4 Indian and Grandpa Goins was about 1/2". This heritage has not been established as a fact, but Grandpa believed it. His Grandma Susan Minor's mother was Aggy Sizemore and most of these families filed Cherokee Indian Application beginning in 1905.

Having backtracked the Melungeons from the Clinch River to the New River, to the Flat River and the Pamunkey has helped me to personally dismiss many fables about the Melungeons. One major discovery was that they migrated with the other pioneer settlers and they owned land in all these places. They lived next door to white settlers and had adjoining farms. They went to the same churches and schools, intermarried with all their neighbors, fought in the same wars, including Lord Dunmore's War 1774 Militia of Fincastle County, Virginia. These men were to fight in the battle of Point Pleasant against

the Shawnee Indians. John Collins served 35 days; Micager Bunch served 29 days (1774. Soldiers of Fincastle County, Virginia by Kegley).

Also, I have found no record where they were driven from their land, or driven to the mountains, etc., etc. This rumor may have started from the outdoor drama "Walk Toward the Sunset." I also discovered that most of the story Calloway Collins told the reporter Will Allen Dromgoole in the 1890 interview on Newman Ridge was true. "The Collins and Gibsons were living as Indians in Virginia before they migrated to North Carolina." The Indian tribe was not named and has not been factually proven, but the important part, moving from Virginia to North Carolina has been proven by deeds from all these areas, beginning on the Pamunkey River in Louisa County, Virginia. Orange County, Virginia Order Book 3 record "Alexander Machartoon, John Bowling, Manincassa, Capt Tom, Isaac, Harry, blind tom, Foolish Jack, Charles Griffin, John Collins, Little Jack, Indians being bought before the court for stealing Hogs, Ordered that their Guns be taken away from them till they are ready to depart of this county, they having declared their intentions to depart this colony within a week". On pages 309-312 of Court Record book the above named men individually put up security.<sup>4</sup>

This party of Saponia ( Monasukapanough) Indians left that county and some of these may have been the same group that formed the settlement near Hillsborough, North Carolina in 1750. It appears from Granville and Orange County tax records that a John Collins arrived in the area about this time. John Collins lived on the Flat River for about 17 years then moved to the New River circa 1767. Tax records from Grayson County, Virginia reveals that Lewis and James Collins were likely sons of John Collins. "James Collins, John Bolin, and Mike Bolin Indians from Blackwater, Newman Ridge, were named by Sneedville attorney Lewis M. Jarvis in 1903, as quite full blooded who fought in the War of 1812-1814".<sup>5</sup> Another Indian family Moses and Mary, Ridley, Riddle are on these same Granville and Orange County, North Carolina tax lists, identified as mulattoes. In Orange County Moses was closely associated with Charles Gibson, Thomas Gibson Sr & Jr, Thomas Collins, Joseph Collins, William Bolin, and John Brown. Moses later moved to Pittsylvania County, Virginia where he is recorded on a 1767 Pittsylvania County Tax List as "an Indian."<sup>6</sup> Moses and Mary were the parents of a William and John Riddle (alias Ridley) who filed a Revolutionary War pension application his Randall moved to Hawkins County, Tennessee. Several Collins, Bolling and other related Melungeon names still live in this area today, now Person County, North Carolina.

Their migration journey began in the 1740's and ended on Newman Ridge about 1790. I can only document one person who lived to make this complete journey. He was Charles Gibson. Charles was the oldest living Melungeon on Newman Ridge when he filed his Revolutionary War Pension Application in 1839 stating that he was born in Louisa County, Virginia. He enlisted near Salisbury, North Carolina. Benjamin Collins, Jonathan Gibson and Jordan Gibson testified that Charles Gibson was reputed to be a Revolutionary War Soldier in their neighborhood. Charles Gibson was the son of Thomas Sr. and Mary Gibson. They sold their land on the Pamunkey River in 1749 to Thomas Mooreman. This land was located on the south side of the Pamunkey River adjoining Gilbert Gibson's land. Gilbert was the father of Gedion, Jordan, and George Gibson. [Louisa County, Va., deeds and wills]

My incredible research journey includes actually locating and going to these above-mentioned areas. Several photos of these Rivers and Landmarks are in my book "Melungeons And Other Pioneer Families." One of my most memorable discoveries was the Flat River Primitive Baptist Church established in 1750. The present church that stands in the same location was built circa 1930's. The earliest minutes found to date begin in 1770. Unfortunately most of the Melungeons left that area for the New River beginning in 1767.

Living in the neighborhood also created a mystery for me concerning the Melungeons and has left me with two troubling questions, which I have not been able to solve, but one of the most important things I have learned from this research was the words, "perhaps and maybe."

Mystery problem #1- Did the 1700 Melungeon forefathers refer to themselves as Melungeons? If the answer to this question is yes, no records have been found that actually call them by the name Melungeon. Also, to my knowledge no Melungeon tribe has been documented prior to the record in Tennessee.

Mystery problem #2- Was this name Melungeon coined by the local people? If the answer to this question is yes the name would only apply to those people. This is the message I got from living in the land of the Melungeons because during the early years of my life time no person in that neighborhood was actually identified as a Melungeon until after the 1947 Post story, because those people in this time period told their children; "If you don't be quiet the Melungeons will get you." They would tell you the Melungeons lived somewhere else, or over on the next ridge, etc.

In conversations with several old-timers including two who's pictures are in the Melungeon story "Sons of the Legend" (1947 Saturday Evening Post Article.) They did not realize until the story was published in the Saturday Evening Post that they were the Melungeons the author was writing about.

William L. Warden, author of this Saturday Evening Post story, asked Asa Gibson who was then 75 years old if his ancestors were Welsh Warriors, Phoenicians or survivors of Roanoke his answer, "an Indian."

One person in the Post story told me the whole Melungeon thing was a myth and laughed about it. She assured me there was no such thing as a Melungeon, but like Grandpa Goins, they also claimed to be of Indian descent. In conversations and letter from Melungeon descendants, including the Collins, Gibson and Bolin families they also claimed Indian descent.

Several authors have suggested that the Melungeons were lying about their Indian nationality just to hide their known African ancestors. I am convinced that old Asa Gibson told the author William Warden, (Saturday Evening Post 1947) story what he believed was the truth, that his ancestors were Indian. This does not exclude Asa from the possibility of having both white, and or black genes. Example; In colonial days if an indentured servant, regardless of their nationality married a Saponia Indian and was accepted in their said Indian tribe, their children would be recognized as Indians. In a few generations their original nationality would be lost to history if they remained in the tribe. If these children married whites, mulattoes, or other free blacks they would eventually lose their Indian identity and would not have a clue as to their original nationality.

Let us examine the historical Melungeons. The first known records that specifically identifies a group of people historically known as the (Melungins) and living in

Tennessee. These records also pinpoint their location. Let us examine some of these written records.

Some of the Tennessee State Senators first denied that there was such a race living in Tennessee according to the reporter Will Allen Dromgoole who kept asking and was told by another senator (not named), that the (Malungeons) live in his district. "Only upon the records of the State of Tennessee does the name appear."

This author discovered the word Melungin written in the 1813 Minutes of Stony Creek Church, which was from an accusation that a lady in the church was housing them "Melungins", There is not enough written about this incident to actually determine anything factual. Some of the first Melungeon families migrated circa 1790's from the New River area of Wilkes County, North Carolina to Fort Blackmore and joined the Stony Creek Church 1801-1802. The majority of these were from the old Thomas and Mary Gibson family who originally migrated from Louisa County, Virginia beginning in 1749. Most of these families were gone by 1810.

This term "Malungeons" sprang up again in "The Wig" a Jonesboro, Tennessee newspaper. This may have been during a political campaign October 7, 1840. (3) And again in the celebrated Melungeon trial of 1872 Bolton girl represented by Attorney Lewis Shepard, of Chattanooga, Tennessee "She is related to a group of people living in the mountains of East Tennessee known as (Malungeons)" 1. This statement was made by attorney Lewis Shepard, describing his Melungeon client whose mother was a Bolton. Shepard presented the following argument; "The term "Melungeon" is an East Tennessee provincialism; it was coined by the people of that county to apply to these people and is derived from the word, melange, meaning mixture and has gotten into most modern dictionaries". The argument presented in this trial was that this family was not Negro, but pure-blooded Carthaginians (2). In his personal memoirs Judge Lewis Shepard wrote, "this mysterious racial group descended from the Phoenicians of Ancient Carthage". [2-Memoirs of Judge Lewis Shepard, Chattanooga, 1915 p, 88.] also [2-3-4-5-6 Melungeons: And Other Pioneer Families]

Several racial clans that existed in the Eastern United States in the 1940-50's have been recognized. Some of these were the Redbones, Croatans, Brass Ankles, Ramps and Melungeons. According to my research of known Melungeon families, the Ramps of Fort Blackmore were related to the families that became known as Melungeons. Oddly the term Melungeon may have also began in Fort Blackmore and later the term Ramps were placed on their kinfolks who remained in Fort Blackmore. Ramptown, known by the locals is located between Fort Blackmore and Dungannon, in Scott County, Virginia.

#### About The Author:

Jack Goins Lives in Rogersville, Tennessee, Retired from AFG Industries, began family research at an early age.

(1) Articles include; Zephaniah Goins Fought In Yorktown Campaign [Gowen Research Foundation Newsletter, Volume 5 number 3, 1993.]

(2) Melungeon Families-Sizemore, Minor, Goins, Fisher and Riddle Article in [1994 Families Of Hawkins County, Tennessee page 537 to 540]

(3 and 4) Arrington Family page 88 and co-authored Henry Fisher family page 126. [Hancock County, Tennessee And It's People Volume II 1994]

(5) Sizemore Family, Jan 1999 Distant Crossroads Volume XVI, Number 1

(6) May 2000, Published a book "Melungeon And Other Pioneer Families" price \$17.95

## **A SEARCH IN PROGRESS**

By: CINDY HARTMAN

I grew up knowing that we had Native American Indian blood in our family. And was told the Indian heritage was Cherokee. It was always an intriguing thing to me, imagining ancestors living in teepees and wearing animal skin clothing. I pictured an ancestor wearing a feather headdress. No one in my family ever tried to hide the fact that we had American Indian heritage. However, no one, to my knowledge, ever wrote down anything about our Indian ancestors to pass on to later generations. That heritage might have been a shameful thing to some of my ancestors, but I was never aware of that attitude in the ancestors that I had the privilege of knowing. My hopes are of one day uncovering the identity of my Native American ancestors. I would like to know how they lived and to what tribes they belonged. I would also like to know if my ancestors were forced to leave their home and go on the "Trail of Tears". And if my mother's family really did have an Indian chief like I was told when I was a child. I have daydreamed of traveling to Oklahoma and North Carolina, just to see if I can find any Indian people who resemble my family members.

Many people have been accused of trying to be Indian, for reasons that may be less than noble. My desire is to know who my family was, and understand the things that may have happened to them. And why those things happened to them. I know that some of my white relatives killed Indians. I just wonder if those relatives were part American Indian themselves. My great-grandfather was a bounty hunter, hunting Indians who had stolen horses from white men. I believe he was part Indian. There are heart-breaking stories of Indians being massacred, and equally heart breaking stories of white settlers being massacred by Indians. I have read that Governor John Sevier of Tennessee had a desire to wipe out the Cherokees. But I also know that he lost many close family members to an ambush by Indians, giving him the motive of revenge. His niece was a "step" fourth great- grandmother in my family and she was scalped by Indians. I have wondered if any of those Indians were my relatives, and why the two ethnic groups could not get along and peacefully coexist.

My paternal grandmother always appeared to me to be partly American Indian. She was born in Webber's Falls, Cherokee Indian Territory, Oklahoma, in 1910. Recently, her sister told me she and her siblings were 1/16th Cherokee. I now suspect that there may be more American Indian heritage in our family than I was told about. My grandmother's known ancestors were Abbotts, Loopers, Walkers, Taylors, Freemans and Jones, with the last three being common Melungeon related surnames. I am currently researching Walkers, Abbotts, and Taylors in Oklahoma and Arkansas, trying to locate them on Indian Census information or Indian Nation Rolls. I have found Abbotts listed as Cherokee and Osage, including one Abbott who was an Osage Tribal Council member.

There have been a few Taylors listed as Cherokee. At the age of 22, my great-grandmother (an Abbott) was described as "tall, slender, and with black hair." I believe the black hair is a likely clue to the Indian heritage in this line of my family. My Abbotts and Loopers lived in Scott County, Arkansas, moving to Webber's Falls, Indian Territory, Oklahoma in 1892 and 1896, respectively. They moved on to Texas about 1914. Much of this line of my family started out in South Carolina.

I have an uncle by marriage with the last name of Bryan. He is of Cherokee descent, and his Indian heritage, and that of his father, is obvious. His degree of Indian blood I believe to be very high, but he cannot prove it. He and his parents were told that records showing his ancestry were destroyed in a fire. From stories passed down in his family, he does know that he had ancestors on the Trail of Tears. When his daughter was a baby, she was often mistaken for an Oriental child. My uncle was in the Air Force, and people assumed that he had adopted a Korean child. As a grown woman she is clearly Indian. She is a first cousin on my father's side of the family, so she has also inherited any American Indian we may have from my father's parents. Her children's surname is Hall, also a Melungeon related name.

I do not believe anyone in my father's family was aware of American Indian ancestors in the line of my paternal grandfather Roberson, although his father appeared to be very dark skinned, with Indian facial features. Very little is known about his family, as my great-grandfather seemed to have a knack for alienating his loved ones. Yet I have found many Robersons listed on Oklahoma Creek and Cherokee Indian records. I was encouraged to find several Indian men with the same first and last names as my grandfather. I hope to be able to prove they are related. Other known names in my grandfather's line are Polk, Green, Malone, and Yeager. Since Roberson and Green are common Melungeon related names, I am sure we have Native American blood in this line. The Robersons, Polks and Greens lived in central and east Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina before my branch of the family moved to Texas. From this line, I have Hill and Moore cousins, which are also Melungeon surnames.

I was told from the time I was a little girl, that my maternal grandmother was 1/16th Cherokee Indian. I can remember her telling me many years ago that there was an Indian chief in our family. Whether that is true or not, I many never know. A photograph of my grandmother at the age of twenty-one shows her to be very obviously Indian. She was beautiful and looked very much like the stereotypical picture of an Indian maiden. She had dark hair and eyes, with an olive complexion that tanned very well. I have only seen one picture of her father, but from his appearance, I know that there is Indian heritage in his line. My maternal grandmother's family names that I have researched so far are Fulgham, Fox, Laird, Kirkwood, and Taylor. From this line I also have cousins named White and an Adkins cousin of Lucas descent, all Melungeon related names.

My maternal grandfather's family line, Guinn, is the one on which I have done the most research. The name was originally spelled Gwin, in the 1700's in western Virginia. I have many Melungeon related names in this line of my family. One great-great grandmother was a Norris and another was a Hogge. A "fourth" great- grandmother was a Smith from northern Georgia. From the Guinn line I have Bass, Gann, Byrd, Williams and Reeves cousins. Growing up, I had never heard of any American Indian in this line of my family, but because of the Melungeon connections, I believe there was. Most of these people lived in the Augusta County, Virginia and Greene County, Tennessee areas,

before moving to Texas. Other known names from my Guinn line are Crenshaw, Fairburn and McDonald. I have not yet investigated these names to see if there is any Indian connection.

I think many times we are able to see American Indian features in other people, but may not see them in ourselves. Recently, I asked a friend if she knew what degree of Indian she was. She looked surprised and wanted to know if I thought she was Indian because of her high cheekbones. She did not seem to know if she had Indian heritage, although she did know her stepfather was 1/4th Indian. She is so clearly Indian by her appearance, that no one would doubt it. Several years ago when my son had surgery, his nurse thought I looked too young to be his mother. When I told her my age, she attributed my appearance to being part American Indian. I have never thought I had any American Indian features. But one of my three sisters has definite Indian features. I have a picture of her as a child with her long, dark hair pulled back in pigtails. She has dark eyes, and skin that tans to a medium brown. In the picture, she resembles an Indian maiden, just like our grandmother did.

I have not begun to research my husband's family, but would like to do so. He was adopted as a baby in West Virginia, so we have not discovered his biological heritage. I do believe he is of Melungeon descent because of his appearance and birthplace, so my children will have inherited American Indian from their father also. I am excited about the possibilities in that search.

I believe most people born in this country have Native American Indian ancestry. Many do not know it because the amount of Indian blood is so small, or the ancestor was so far back in history. Many of my ancestors lived in northwest Arkansas and Oklahoma, where there was a large Native American population. I am a mixture of people from many different countries and many different walks of life. I am proud of all my ancestry, including Native American, Melungeon, and European. I will be equally proud of anything further research may reveal. And I will pass this pride in our heritage on to my children.

About The Author:

Cindy Hartman lives in Deer Park, TX, just outside Houston, with her husband, Steve, son Brandon and daughter Bethany.

## REMNANT INDIANS OF THE SOUTHEAST

By: KARLTON DOUGLAS

I have always been interested in American Indians. From my boyhood until the present my ears have perked up at the very mention of the word Indian. So it is no wonder that I was fascinated in finding out about the Indian looking cousins on my mom's side of the family, and that clearly Indian Great Grandmother on my dad's side. Then there were all those people from East Tennessee and Southeastern Kentucky that looked like Indians. How could I explain my own East Tennessee Indian heritage, along with the legion of those other folks that were from Tennessee and Kentucky who looked like, and claimed to be Indian? There were not supposed to be any Indians in those regions—they had all been moved out west, at least that is the “official” story.

So I started building upon an already well-established foundation of interest in Native Americans. I began searching for clues, any reference I could find for Indians that may have remained in the southeast. There was substantial information that through hiding their heritage, intermarriage with other “races”, passing for white, black, or mulatto, that American Indians did indeed leave descendants in the southeast.

In searching for the Indian origin of my great grandmother Mary Byrge Wishoun I was directed to a resident Indian tribe and chief in Scott County, Tennessee where my great grandmother was born, and lived for several years. An editor for a newspaper in that region gave me the telephone number of the tribal chief. I had several phone conversations with her, and correspondence by mail. Donna Markham, also known as Laughing Fawn, is Chief of the United Eastern Lenape Nation (middle division). Formerly known as the Upper Cumberland River Cherokee. The Cherokee band merged with the Lenape when a Chief from that tribe moved south to Tennessee from Ohio and joined them. Chief Markham uses the tribe as a springboard to help the poor in Appalachia. I am proud to say she accepted me as a member in the tribe.

Another interesting event in my desire to gain knowledge about Indians in general came from a visit a few years ago to the newly opened Zane Shawnee Caverns and Indian Museum near my home here in Ohio. Chief Hawk Pope—a direct descendant of the Shawnee Chief Cornstalk—who is today a leader of the Shawnee Nation United Remnant Band, happened to be at the museum and gave me a personal tour. He showed me the artwork, and other exhibits, explaining how the Shawnees had much in common with their neighbors to the south the Cherokee. He also spoke briefly about how Native Americans often were listed as Black Dutch on census records. The personal tour was an honor, and I really enjoyed his insights.

Again the conviction continued to grow that not all Indians were out west.

It is hard to deny your own eyes. Many of the children I grew up with were from the southeast. I had friends that looked like Indians right out of the southwest. Their parents had come from Tennessee and Kentucky for jobs in the Midwest, just like my mother did. When I worked in factories in Ohio, many of the good people I worked with from Kentucky and Tennessee also had Native American features, one guy was actually called by the nickname “Indian”. On top of this, my wife, whose family is from Southeastern Kentucky, has Native American ancestry on both sides of her family that clearly show Indian features. This too was a source of interest in the overall picture of these people

who appeared to be Indians from the southeast. So the desire for answers continued to grow.

In looking for answers to these Indians of the modern Southeast, I ran across the Melungeons, and discovered that my mom's side was very likely Melungeon through the Branham surname. I found that Melungeons are considered to be at least part Native American. And researchers like Virginia DeMarce had connected Southeastern Siouan Indians to Appalachian area people. A book called: *Indian Island In Amherst County*, by Peter W. Houck and Mindy D. Maxham, also showed evidence of Southeastern Siouan Indians in Virginia. They pointed out that a Lewis Evans map of 1751 clearly showed Monacan (Siouan), and Tuscarora (Iroquoian) Indians living in the mountains of Southwestern Virginia. Not only that, they also listed my maternal grandmother's Branham surname as being prominent among the Monacan Indians. My first documented Branham ancestor was found in the adjoining county to Amherst in the late 1700s. Recently I have found that in the same area a group known as the Buffalo Ridge Cherokee was also asserting their Indian heritage.

## **THE CHEROKEE**

The Cherokee was the largest tribe in this region of the southeast where so many Indian looking people have come from. We know that about one thousand Cherokees were able to stay behind in North Carolina and avoid removal to the west.

Cherokee Indians were often mixed with other ethnic groups. Consider that quite a number of Cherokee had already intermarried to whites by the early 1800s, and that it is shown in books like: *Black Indians*, by William Loren Katz, that tribes like the Cherokee had intermarried with Blacks, as well. Indeed as early as 1721 slaves were known to speak not only English, but the Cherokee language also. It is notable that African slaves and Cherokees also shared a common folklore in the "Brother Rabbit" stories as noted by James Mooney in his book about the Cherokee. The proportion of Indian blood among southern Blacks is probably considerable. In the decades between the Revolution and the Civil War Black Indian Societies were reported in TN. VA. NC. NJ. NY. DE. MD. SC. CT. MA. William Loren Katz points this out. It is no stretch to imagine that many Indians, and part Indians were able to avoid removal by simply claiming to be of another race, or were assumed by later Census takers to be so. In his book: *From Africa To America*, William D. Piersen says that many African Americans labeled as mixed-race were a mixture of African and Native American ancestry rather than African and white European ancestry.

Samuel Carter in his book: *Cherokee Sunset*, notes that Black slaves worked arm in arm with their Cherokee owners. The Blacks were allowed to plant their own crops, also their children went to the same schools as the children of the Cherokee. Blacks and Cherokees often intermarried. The Children of Black-Cherokee unions were born free. In another place Carter mentions that the 1835 census of the Cherokee listed about 10% of the Nation as Black slaves—1,600 total population Black slaves, keep in mind this is before the removal to the west. There was considerable intermingling between Indians and Blacks.

My Great Grandmother Mary E. Byrge was listed as white on the censuses—you have to wonder about the eyesight of those early census takers—as was her mother Lucy Ann

Newport, both of them show Indian features in photographs. My dad's eyewitness account of his grandmother Mary Byrge also speaks of her looking like a full-blood Indian. And it is understood that she was American Indian through her mother Lucy Ann Newport. If these could pass for white, I can only wonder at how many others must also have passed for white.

The Cherokee tribe probably had contact with more ethnic groups than we will ever know about. All of the southern colonies bought and sold Native American slaves. The slaves worked side by side with Black Africans. As early as 1693 the Cherokee complained slave hunters were kidnapping their people. Hundreds of captured Tuscarora, and nearly the whole tribe of Appalachee was distributed as slaves among Carolina Colonists in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1776 Cherokee prisoners of war were still sold to the highest bidder. The Governor of South Carolina was accused of trying to provoke an Indian war by his encouragement of slave hunts. James Mooney writes of these things in his book on the Cherokee, and on page 224 says: "The Cherokee have strains of Creek, Catawba, Uchee, Natchez, Iroquois, Osage, and Shawano blood," This not only from their contact with those tribes, but from their own "slave" taking excursions. The famous Shawnee Chief Tecumseh's own mother was a Cherokee. She was taken captive from the Cherokees in a reciprocal raid by the Shawnee tribe.

The Uchee/Yuchi Indians resided in East Tennessee, and as far north as the Green River, in Kentucky, Mooney makes note of the fact that the Uchee had a village in Cleveland Tennessee, John Swanton mentions a village in Polk County, Tennessee called the "Rabbit Place". He also mentions that some Yuchi Indians remained in Appalachia among the Cherokee, never moving out of the Appalachian region. The Yuchi were thought to be Siouan Indians, but the Uchean language may be distinct from all others. They called themselves: "Children of the Sun." David H. Corkran in his book about the Creek Indian frontier informs us that Yuchi Indians were said to have stolen English slaves in the 1730s, this shows that the potential for ethnic mixing was there at an early period.

The Natchez also had several villages in Tennessee and a joint village with the Cherokee in North Carolina at the junction of Brasstown Creek and the Hiawasse River. The Natchez were driven into Tennessee because of warfare in the west, in 1729 the Natchez and a group of Blacks attacked the French in Louisiana. It is likely that the some of the Black allies of the Natchez followed them into Tennessee, thus we have opportunity for continued ethnic mixing. Swanton says that the Natchez long maintained an independent existence in the territory of the Cherokee, and that a great deal of Natchez blood flows in the veins of the Cherokee. Both the Yuchi and Natchez tribes were incorporated into the Cherokee before the removal. It is possible that people of East Tennessee and Southeastern Kentucky with Native ancestry may have received that ancestry from Yuchi, Natchez, or other tribes absorbed by the Cherokee that did not go west in the removal.

The Cherokee more than just about any other tribe tried to blend in with the whites around them, in clothing, farming, slave holding, trade, and religion. Still, despite every attempt to remain in the east, President Andrew Jackson was determined to have them removed, even defying a Supreme Court ruling to do so. We know that about one thousand Cherokee were able to officially remain behind in North Carolina, and it is more than likely that other Cherokees remained hidden and blended into the white

communities of Appalachia in particular. I can find no other explanation for the large number of southerners from Tennessee and Kentucky that claim, and certainly show Indian Heritage. It had to be a large, persecuted, southern tribe to leave so many remnant members behind, and the most obvious source is the Cherokee. In 1819 Cherokee territory included the mountainous areas of, NC. TN. GA. AL. The Cherokee in the east numbered 16,542 people in the census for the year 1835. In Tennessee and North Carolina alone they numbered 6,172 individuals in that same census. (The removal didn't take place until the years 1838-1839.)

I believe that at the time of the Cherokee removal in the east a lot of whites were already intermarried into the tribe. Every history about the Cherokee tells of their intermarriage with white Europeans from an early period of contact, before their removal from the east. For instance, the famous Cherokee leader Nancy Ward had a white husband. Any doubt about Cherokee intermarriage with whites is easily removed by looking at eastern Cherokee Rolls, such as the Immigration Roll of 1817 which has a large number of English surnames. Isn't it possible that Indians with white relations, maybe even states away, could have been taken in and hidden during the Cherokee and other removals of the Five Civilized Tribes? This is only a hypothesis, but would help to explain why so many Indians were able to remain in the east. I know my own white Great Grandmother Rachel Walden took in two Indian Children in east Tennessee in the twentieth century to care for, so I hardly think it a stretch that it could have happened in historic times among white families intermarried to the Cherokee. Other Cherokee may simply have hidden in the mountains to avoid being removed. It is hard to believe otherwise when you consider the legion of people who filtered into the Industrial Midwest from southern states that look Indian, and claim Indian heritage. It has been said that there is hardly a county in Ohio that doesn't have someone who claims Indian Heritage. This is in addition to those descendants who remained in the southeast and also claim Indian Heritage. It is a shame that we feel we have to prove our Native Heritage. No one expects you to prove you're German, Irish, and Scottish, but somehow there are doubts if you say you are American Indian, especially if you don't fit the stereotype Hollywood Indian. By all accounts American Indians come in many shapes and sizes, shades and hues. We don't all look like Sitting Bull, or Red Cloud. Cherokee, and being Native American is also a heart and spirit thing as well, that too is overlooked.

The stories of Indian great grandmothers from Appalachia are legion. Made completely believable when you look at their descendants, many of whom do have features that would allow them to walk onto the set of any American Indian Hollywood movie.

In the book: Indians of the United States, by Clark Wissler, he notes that due to continued intermarriage between whites and Indians about half of the Indians in the United States are mixed with whites. By the year 1900 nearly half of all Cherokee were married to whites and spoke English. In the 1990 census 80% of American Indians were of mixed ancestry. American Indians are becoming whiter genetically. Obviously this is not only a recent phenomena.

Besides the three federally recognized tribes of Cherokee, there are more than fifty other Cherokee organizations in at least twelve states.

The Cherokee undoubtedly make up a large portion of Native American input of those from Tennessee, Kentucky and southern Appalachia in general, but an often-overlooked group is the Southeastern Siouan Indians.

## THE SIOUANS

The Southeastern Siouans inhabited the Piedmont region of Virginia and North Carolina.

The northern Iroquois were their enemies. John Lawson, an early surveyor in the southeast said the southern Siouans joined together for mutual protection. There are a dozen or more names for these Siouan tribes. Some of the most prominent names were Monacan, Saponi, Tutelo, Sara, Manahoac, Occaneechi, and Catawba.

The Southeastern Siouans are believed to have originally resided in the Ohio Valley. I take great pleasure in the thought that as a possible descendant of the Siouans I now reside in the area that they originated from. Moreover it is a tradition that the Cherokee also dwelt in the area of Ohio in their early history, but were driven south by their enemies. Maybe there is some poetic justice that my residence is where my Indian forefathers once called home.

The historic home of the Monacans was in Virginia on the James River, at a place called Manikin near Richmond. Today the Monacans reside in Amherst County, Virginia, and are a State recognized Tribe.

The Monacan confederation originally consisted of the Tutelo, Manahoac, Saponi, Sara, and Monacan proper. In the year 1714 the Monacan-Sara of Virginia and North Carolina were estimated at 750 people.

In 1700 John Lawson the surveyor traveled through villages of the southern Siouans. He mentions coming across a unique tribe named the Keyauwee. These Keyauwee Indians had mustaches and whiskers. I think it is quite possible that these Keyauwees were a remnant group of Spaniards, likely intermarried into the southern Indians. The Keyauwee were not mentioned much before 1700 when Lawson found them in a palisade village, after 1761 they do not reappear in any historical records, it is possible that this North Carolina tribe left remnants among today's Indian descendants. As for the Spanish—it is still a mystery as to what happened to some of the Spanish soldiers and Missionaries of Forts in the Carolinas and Tennessee frontier, and other outposts in the southeast. It is quite possible that they took native wives and by 1700 were for all purposes a “tribe”, yet a unique tribe with mustaches and whiskers. It would be interesting to know how many shipwrecked sailors of different nationalities may also have found their way into the southeastern tribes.

After 1700 the Saponi, Keyauwee, Tutelo, and some other small tribes of Indians headed north to Virginia and resided just north of Roanoke, they lived in Virginia 25 years before they were thought to have returned to the Carolinas. I think it likely that some remained in Virginia, then possibly moved further back into the western mountains.

Swanton records that in 1761 the southern Tuscarora, Meherrin, Machapunga, and southern Saponi were on and near Roanoke River in southwestern Virginia and that the Meherrin probably had ultimately united with the Tuscarora. These Indian tribes did not completely remove to the north to join their Iroquois brethren until 1802—so there was ample time for them to mix with the surrounding ethnic groups.

To summarize this: Iroquoian and Siouan tribes in the southeast were already joining forces because of their dwindling numbers after 1700—they told Lawson they were doing this—Tuscarora, Saponi, Meherrin, Monacan, and others were located in the mountains of western and southwestern Virginia circa 1750 and later. These tribes very likely had a disproportionate ratio of females over males due to constant warfare, and because of slave hunters stealing males. When White, FPC (Free Persons of Color), and other males moved into these frontier areas it is likely they would have married the females at hand from the tribes mentioned. Consider also that these tribes like the Keyauwee were probably already mixed with Spanish and others from an earlier period. This explains the Mediterranean element found in groups like the Melungeons, and there is additional information emerging about Armenians and others in Virginia brought over for industries like the silk trade. All this adds up to an interesting and very amalgamated group of people in the southeast. American Indian was certainly a large part of any mixture.

It can be stated that the Spanish were among the Cheraw/Sara/Keyauwee Indians in the area of Asheville, North Carolina. The Spanish fled to this region after Fort Santa Elena and other Forts in that area were destroyed by Indians. These survivors married into the tribes mentioned, and later we find the Keyauwee in Virginia, and Sara towns in Northwest North Carolina (1755).

One other strange, but interesting item is worth mentioning. The Siouan Catawba and the Powhatan Rappahannock both made use of the Crossbow. The Spanish, particularly those Spaniards with De Soto, used this weapon against Indians in the southeast. Also when Juan Pardo was in the southeast years later his men used the crossbow as one of their principle weapons. It is in Pardo's weapon supply list. Could these Indian tribes have learned the use of this weapon from the Spanish?

The State Recognized Virginia Monacans, The Saponi Indians of North Carolina, and the better known tribe of Catawbans evidence that the Southeastern Siouans are still among us.

What about those who were scattered upon the ridges, and within the hollows of the Appalachians? Those who blended into the white settlements, black communities, or who didn't blend in at all but were labeled Melungeon? Is it possible, even likely that the southeastern Siouan blood still flows in the veins of the multitude who have an Indian grandma, or are themselves obviously Indian, yet have no records to back that up?

We know the Southeastern Siouans existed, we know they were in the Appalachian areas as tribes even as late as 1755. Lewis Evans' map of 1751 shows Monacan as well as Tuscarora Indians in the area of southwestern Virginia. Mitchell's map of 1755 shows Sara Indian towns in northwestern North Carolina. Virginia DeMarce mentions the Saponi tribe as residing in Orange County, Virginia, later they were found to be among Tennessee Melungeons. So the Saponi Indians are certainly part of the Indian mix of Appalachians with Indian heritage.

In the twentieth century little articles began to appear in books about Native Americans. The word Tri-Racial-Isolate (White, Black, and Indian), and the label "Marginal Groups" were added to explain pockets of people who claimed to be Native American, especially in the southeast. Melungeon was a name that was also applied to them. The Historians and Ethnologists were not sure what to do with these people, but they had to classify them somehow. They figured they had it covered by using the label Tri-Racial, so they tucked them into this category thinking they had it figured out. And I

agree that Tri-Racial is part of the mix, we know for instance that Lawson ran into Virginia Traders with 38 loaded pack horses when he left the Keyauwee village. That was in 1700—I am sure there was plenty of white contact after that time. And just by considering the well-known historic tribes and their positive attitude about blacks—adopting and accepting them as fellow warriors—it is not hard to picture them in the mix as well. After all, where would a free person of color or an escaped slave head to in those days before the Underground Railroad? Obviously west, into the mountains, and who would they run into there—the Eastern Siouan Indians.

In a book called: *From Africa to America*, by William D. Piersen, he notes that from the time of the Spaniard expeditions of the sixteenth century Africans would escape from their Spanish masters and settle among the American Indians. Those Tuscarora Indians already mentioned as being in southwestern Virginia in 1751 were known to have built forts during the Tuscarora War that resembled forts in West Africa. Indeed it seems that an escaped African named Harry who joined the Tuscarora Indians was the one who taught them to build their sturdy forts. Though many of the Tuscarora would go north and join their Iroquois brothers, they would do so over a period of ninety years. And there were neutral Tuscarora who did not take part in the Tuscarora War who may never have moved north. The Tuscarora Indians are undoubtedly part of the mixture of southeastern people with Native American heritage.

William D. Piersen records that on the Appalachian frontier black males escaping slavery would marry into the Indian nations of that area who had become weakened. And these black males took the place of missing Indian males among the tribes. And that is the very thing I have thought for quite some time—I was glad to find I wasn't the only one to think so. Warfare along with Indian males being taken as slaves had to leave an uneven ratio of males to females among many tribes in the southeast. Just as the male ratio of black slaves probably outnumbered females—especially of those likely to be found on the frontier, this was a situation that made a good fit for black males and Indian females.

Considering just the face value of the term Tri-Racial, a question arises in my mind—what tribe made up the Indian part? I think an obvious answer is—along with the Cherokee and some Tuscarora—the Southeastern Siouans. What group made up the white part besides possible children of the traders, and maybe some escaped white indentured servants, along with the later whites moving into the frontier area of Appalachia? Could Spanish Portuguese have been mixed in there? Besides those already mentioned where did the blacks come from who joined the mix? Could some of them have been among the Spanish as Conversos—Moors? We need to be cautious about trying to put folks into a tidy little box ethnically or racially.

The Spanish spent more time in Georgia than any other area of the southeast with the exception of Florida. They had contact with the Cherokee, but particularly with the Creek Indians. It is very likely that the Spanish—and those who were with them—are part of the genetic mixture of the southeastern Indians.

Something that jumped out at me in William D. Piersen's book was that in 1653 an Englishman was taken to a Tuscarora Indian village where he found a wealthy Spaniard with his family of thirty persons. Also with the Spaniard were seven black slaves. Not only did the Englishman find these, but also there was a strange black person said to be of the "Newxes" nation. After digging around a bit I would now speculate that this last

person was actually from the Neusiok tribe of Indians. These Neusiok Indians lived south of the Neuse River in North Carolina and were believed to have joined the Tuscarora Indians.

So here again we have a situation with Indians, blacks, and a “rich” Spaniard. Nothing is dull about the history of the southeast.

Back to the Siouans. I think from what little bit I have written here it is obvious that the southeastern Siouans have not completely disappeared. I think it is not a stretch to say they make up the heritage of at least some Appalachian people with Indian heritage. Since all the Indians were supposed to have been sent out west, in the eye of the census beholder these folks were listed as White, Black, Mulatto, Black Dutch, Mixed, and Free Person of Color (FPC). The academics fairly worship these often bogus census records, and point to them as evidence in their studies. I have seen enough census records to doubt them in a serious way. I have seen race designation on census micro-films that have been changed white to black, black to white, two brothers living beside each other, one listed as white, one listed as black. My own great-grandmother was very dark, yet she was given a white rating on the census. So let us not put too much of our faith in these records. Especially when you are looking at a stand in for Pocahontas, and she is listed as white.

### **FINAL THOUGHT**

A great obstacle in researching our Indian ancestors is that Native Americans did not keep written records. And the few records kept by whites—often-unsympathetic whites—had more to do with warfare than genealogy. It is very hard for instance to go back to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and find a record of Mr. Blue Owl of the Cherokee, Saponi, or Tuscarora Nation. By the time census records got done with those who may have been already inter-married into another ethnic group, it is hard to know what race they were because of reasons already stated regarding census record reliability. We are left with photographs, traditions, and a process of exclusion in trying to document these ancestors. We may never satisfy the hard core skeptics. Though many of us know in our hearts, and by common sense that we do have American Indian ancestry, even if we can't find it written in stone. So we consider the many people who have come out of Appalachia that look Indian, and have a family tradition of Indian heritage. And it is then only common sense to look for the tribes that were in that area: the Cherokee and amalgamated tribes, Tuscarora, and Eastern Siouans. Find out what happened to them, and make an educated guess to see if the Kentucky, Tennessee and southern Appalachian descendants of Indians could be from these mixed Cherokee, Tuscarora, and eastern Siouan tribes. To me the answer is a resounding Yes!

Are there people from Kentucky and Tennessee—Appalachia in general that are American Indian? The answer again is a resounding Yes!

Note:

I have focused mainly on the regions of Kentucky, Tennessee and southern Appalachia where these descendants of Indians may have got their Indian ancestry. There are more groups in the Southeast such as the Lumbee, Seminoles, and others who also descend from Indians that I have not delved into here, but nevertheless are Southeastern Indians.

It should also be noted that people who migrated westward into Appalachia from the Tidewater-coastal regions might have already been mixed with Powhatan, Pamunkey, and other coastal tribes—thus they would have been added to the Indian mix as well.

### MAIN SOURCES

History, Myths, And Sacred Formulas Of The Cherokees, by James Mooney.

Indian Island In Amherst County, by Peter W. Houck, M.D. and Mintcy D. Maxham.

Black Indians, by William Loren Katz.

Encyclopedia Of North American Indians, edited by Frederick E. Hoxie.

The Indian Tribes Of North America, by John Reed Swanton.

The Indians Of The Southeastern United States, by John Reed Swanton

“Very Slitly Mixt” Tri-Racial Isolate Families Of The Upper South A Genealogical Study, by Virginia Easley DeMarce.

Indians Of The United States, by Clark Wissler.

The Creek Frontier, by David H. Corkran.

From Africa To America, by William D. Pierson.

### **RACIAL REALITIES, AMERICAN INDIANS AND MELUNGEONS**

By: KARLTON DOUGLAS

I don't think it is easy for us to grasp the realities that many of our ancestors were faced with.

Can you imagine what it would have been like to be a person of color in say, 1820, or 1920?

During early periods of outright racism they were dealing with racial laws and prejudice on an unbelievable scale. People of Color were forced to go “underground”. By 1920 there were five million people in the KKK. That is about equal to half the present population of OHIO!

You have a period where the offspring of mixed Indians dared not admit to being Native American—for fear of being removed to the west—so they may have claimed to

be free blacks. Later after the Indians were removed they would have found it safer to claim to be Indian than black because of racial prejudice against blacks. I can easily picture a white man, or woman, claiming their dark mate's ancestry was Indian, or African, depending on the racial climate, to avoid persecution for their mixed children. In one or two generations no one would know the difference, and would accept what the ancestors claimed, or were labeled as. I give one note of caution here. Though my focus has been on American Indians and the mixing of the various ethnic groups, I do not consider to be prejudice those individuals who reject one ethnic group or another as being part of their own particular Melungeon line. Not if it is because their own family-line has shown through genealogical research and family traditions to be either Indian, or African, or Mediterranean, and is basically one of those, exclusive of the others. Their research may point to one, or the other of those sources of origin. I do however take issue with those people who insist that because their ethnic ancestry is either one particular ancestry, or another—all other Melungeons must be of that ethnic ancestry as well, and they would exclude the other ethnic groups from the mix. I do not wish to imply in any of the writing that I have done about Melungeons that a person is prejudice because they really believe their Melungeon ancestor was of this, or that ethnic group. Just don't try to tell me a person was not a Melungeon because they had an ethnic group involved in their heritage that someone does not approve of.

I paint with the broadest possible brush, but I acknowledge that every individual Melungeon family is different.

Knowing human nature and the facts we have—racial mixing has always occurred. It was probably amazing to see how fast racial prejudice could melt when a white man or woman fell head-over-heels for an attractive person of color. Now some people of color were Indian, but likely others were not. When you consider the sheer numbers of Mulattos, Africans—slave and free—compared to the number of Native Americans in the east, and southeast, you have to conclude that a good sized portion of those early people of color were of African Ancestry, or at least part African Ancestry.

I do believe there is a unique blend in Melungeon. The term Tri-Racial applies in some instances, but I believe the core of the groups ethnic stock was more involved than that. We should probably also include small Native American tribes now considered “extinct” that were mixed with Mediterranean people. This Native American-Mediterranean group later on would likely welcome into their communities those who would also find themselves set apart outside of it. Like poor whites, freed slaves, and other Indians trying to avoid persecutions—such as members of the Five Civilized Tribes. Thus some of them at least became in part Tri-Racial (White, Black, Indian). This isn't to create some great mysterious people; problem is that there has been a great mystery about Melungeons from an early stage in our country's history. It is quite likely that some Mediterranean people were in the core group, whether that group was Portuguese, Arab Moor, Sephardic Jew, Spanish, Turkish, is anyone's guess. Genetic evidence will not let us rule out a Mediterranean blend, and it had to be early on, and isolated to the point of keeping that blend, or we would have had better historic evidence of who Melungeons are. What we have is hints at shipwrecked sailors, abandoned peoples, the name “Portugee” it is all mysterious but not very satisfying.

The Melungeon mix is not an exact proportion. White is evident in many, but some appear to be mostly Indian, or black, or have a dark European look. Again, there is no exact mixture, to say Melungeon is to say—mixed!

Here is the great fun—or aggravation of it all—many of these people have flown the coup, so to speak. They have scattered as Appalachia has opened up to the rest of the world, and Melungeon descendants have left Appalachia to find better jobs, and less prejudice by hiding their past. Many look “white”, so they had no trouble hiding their past. No one can blame Melungeons for wanting to avoid having their children suffer persecution. But now that some of those fires of racial hatred have died down the grandchildren and great grandchildren want to know where their ethnic ancestry came from—even if it includes African and American Indian, maybe even especially if it does.

I think it will be interesting to see if an exact definition of Melungeon can ever be concluded. But the answer can not be one of exclusion—or we become the very thing our ancestors dreaded.

### **ABOUT MEDITERRANEAN PEOPLE AMONG AMERICAN INDIANS**

There are three ethnic groups that I don't question whether or not they are part of the "Melungeon Mix", considering that they are mixed in different amounts, and all three may not be involved in every family:

White Northern European, Black African, Red American Indian. For me the only question is if, and when Mediterraneans came into the mix. I believe they are, and in 3 different waves, I will call it: The Three-Wave-Theory.

**FIRST:** Through the well known historical fact that Spanish soldiers and Missionaries were in the American Southeast. And as someone pointed out—they didn't have women with them. Also Forts in the southeast were abandoned and we still don't know what happened to the Spanish group of people who manned them. I think it likely that these Spaniards mixed with the surrounding Indian tribes.

**SECOND:** Through Tidewater and Coastal Indian tribes that were pushed back into Appalachian areas by the advance of whites, such as the Powhatan Indians of Virginia, Tuscarora Indians of North Carolina, the Coosa Indians of South Carolina. There are reports of shipwrecks, and stranded sailors on the Carolina coast, I think if these men survived they did so by joining nearby Indian tribes.

**THIRD:** Through facts that are now coming to light of Armenians, and possibly Turkish slaves who were brought to America in the 17th century. I think it likely that these people would have moved back into the frontier area much like the FPC (Free People of Color) did, and mixed with the forming groups of Melungeons.

Some specific information:

In checking on which Indian tribe it would have been that mixed with the Spanish who were driven from Santa Elena, South Carolina, and went to the area of Asheville, North Carolina. My best deduction based on John Swanton's book: Indians of the Southeastern United States, is the Cheraw tribe whose home was in the area of Asheville, North Carolina. These Indians are specifically mentioned as having contact with these Spaniards. This tribe became the Saura/Sara Indians. De Soto had visited them early on, and Spanish captain Juan Pardo visited them in 1566 and built a fort there named Fort San Juan in which he left his lieutenant Boyano with some soldiers. Later Boyano took

part of his force to Chiaha on the Tennessee River. When Pardo reached the Cheraw town in 1567 the Indians had it besieged, but the Indians submitted on Pardo's arrival. When Pardo returned to Santa Elena this garrison and three others were destroyed by the Natives. And there is no record of what became of the Spanish here, except that they appear to have settled east of Asheville, North Carolina which brings us back around to the Cheraw/Sara Indians again. Later the Cheraw/Sara did join the Keyauwee, we actually never hear much about the Keyauwee until around 1700 which makes them suspect as they are the bunch singled out by the surveyor John Lawson as being the strange mustached and bearded Indians. Maurice Mathews of South Carolina listed tribes he was familiar with in the Carolinas in 1670. He had visited them in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Among others he names the Keyawah (Keyauwee), and he says of these tribes of Carolina, that the Indians were generally "Poore and Spanish."

The Keyauwee traveled north to Virginia and disappear from the records after 1761—which makes them an excellent suspect Indian tribe for Mediterranean input in Melungeon lines. My belief that the Keyauwee were mixed with Spaniards seems very likely.

A few more things are worth mentioning regarding Spanish-Indian mixing. Lawson says of the Catawba "King", that he kept on hand several prostitutes for service to Europeans who passed by.

In the book: *The Juan Pardo Expeditions*, by Charles Hudson, he mentions that one of Pardo's men, Juan Martin married an Indian woman named Teresa. He likely married her in the back country when he was posted there under Boyano during Pardo's first expedition. Boyano also brought eight women slaves out of the interior, they were set free in the year 1567. The Pardo expeditions were during the years 1566-1568 and covered the areas of South Carolina, North Carolina, and East Tennessee. The forts setup by Pardo were later destroyed by Indians, a few soldiers escaped, some may have been taken prisoner, while others were killed by the Indians.

The Juan Pardo documents clearly show how dependent the Spaniards were upon the Indians for food, and that the survival of these Spaniards was clearly dependent upon the goodwill of the Indians. Pardo was in contact with the Creek-Muskogean, Iroquoian, Catawba-Siouan, and likely Yuchean tribes. It cannot be emphasized enough that the Spanish explorers had a good deal of contact with the Creek tribes, but it is worth noting that the Cherokee were also visited by Pardo at a village called Tocaé, near present Asheville, North Carolina.

On the ethnic mixing issue you should know that Pardo specifically warned his commander at Fort Santiago not to let the soldiers bring women in at night. Do you think that may have been a problem? Consider the account of Teresa Martin, the wife of Juan Martin, given in the year 1600 that when Pardo did not return at an appointed time the soldiers abused the native women, bringing the wrath of the Indian men against the Spaniards.

I will offer one last thing for your consideration. Though I cannot accurately estimate the possible number of Indian-Spanish mixed offspring. I think common sense will allow me to speculate that whatever the number was, those mixed offspring would very likely have been better able to withstand the European diseases and germs brought among the Native Americans by the Spanish. And more likely to be among those remnants Indians

of the southeast who later would mix with other ethnic groups in the area of Appalachia and beyond.

### **MELUNGEONS “POSSIBLE” TIMELINE AND ETHNIC MIX:**

#### **Pre-1600-----1720**

Rootstock: Native Americans, Spanish Portuguese-Moors, Angolan and other Africans.

#### **1720-----1780**

Addition: White Northern Europeans, Free Black-Africans, and additional Native Americans.

(Melungeons still consider themselves Indian & Portuguese at this time.)

#### **1780-----1850**

An Amalgamation: All of the above races and groups: though White Northern European is becoming dominant as can be seen by use of White Surnames. Racist pressures begin to move Melungeons away from their original Culture and Heritage.

#### **1850-----Present**

White Wash: Heavy admixture of Whites. With some Freed Slaves, African Americans, American Indians, and groups of Melungeons continuing to mix over the generations. Though many Melungeons are showing up as White on the Census' and many are trying to hide their ancestry because of persecution. Others are leaving traditional Melungeon areas for better opportunities. With the exception of a few who remained in Melungeon areas, and were proud of their heritage in spite of harassment and prejudice, and who clearly stood out as being of a different ethnic background. The rest are just now, or recently discovering this part of their heritage as info has become available in books, old records coming to light, and through the Internet.

### **RACISM AND CLOSING REMARKS**

Back when I first joined the Melungeon e-mail list at Rootsweb I asked the following question to decide if the list was right for me: “Does this group accept that Blacks are part of the Melungeons?”

I received a number of responses, many were good, but some off-list responses had an underlying anger and resentment that I would even suggest such a thing. I stayed because of the good responses.

Racism is alive and well sad to say. I have seen it from close, and distant relatives, in news reports, and very sadly, even among a few Melungeon descendants. My focus has been on American Indian elements among Melungeons, because that is where I am most knowledgeable—though far from an expert—and because I am reasonably sure of my American Indian Ancestry. Even though I have not located an African American Ancestor yet, that does not mean there is not one on my family tree. Indeed, the thing that got me interested in the Melungeon subject was a statement I heard from my grandmother when I was only a teenager. She said her mother told her that in the Branham line there was a, “N” in the woodpile.

That statement has stuck in my mind, and keeps me looking, “in the woodpile”. It motivated my search into genealogy, trying to discover my own ethnic past. I believe that

he, or she (the African/s) are hiding, not willingly, but because they had to due to the racism around them. Maybe they even took refuge among my Native American ancestors long ago, those who didn't know racism against blacks until whites taught it to them, even then Native Americans never became as expert at it as some whites. I would be surprised to find out that there was not African heritage in my family lines somewhere.

Melungeon descendants must be willing to embrace the totality of our ethnic past: White Northern European, African, American Indian, and Mediterranean. And never should one ethnic group be uplifted at the expense of another. Even though every family is different—some may be mostly White, or Indian, or African, or Mediterranean...that makes them not one iota better or worse than any of the other ethnic groups involved in other Melungeon families.

I have seen positive change among Melungeons. A move toward becoming more accepting of the African element as part of the Melungeon ethnic past, of accepting all the various ethnic elements that make up who Melungeons were, and are today. Exclusion should have no place here, we should never be, of the "Indian", "African", or "Mediterranean" camp, never holding one group up as greater in importance than another. The lesson of Native Americans is clear for anyone with eyes to see—Divide and Conquer. That is the history of Native Americans, one group of Europeans pitting them against another, against themselves, and even against Blacks when the Europeans wanted to secure control over them. When Native Americans joined together they were a force to be reckoned with. Consider the powerful Six Nations Iroquois before they divided during the Revolution. Pontiac and his alliance of Indians, (he was killed by an Indian by the way). Tecumseh the great leader whose oratorical skills for uniting the tribes terrified the whites. Consider Custer's fall at the hands of a united Indian front. We should all learn from these historical lessons that Melungeons must stand together, differences must take a back seat to the common good. I have a vision of what could be, that keeps getting tarnished by dark clouds of division, by things that really don't matter in the final analysis.

I have outlined a number of possible and likely tribes that are involved in Melungeon lines. To me it is not as important that we know the specific tribe as it is that we acknowledge the fact of American Indian involvement in Melungeon heritage. Tecumseh preached that Indians should unite, and simply be known as Indians rather than of this, or that tribe. We should also as Melungeons with Indian heritage be proud to say we are American Indian, regardless of any particular tribe.

American Indian Remnants are among Melungeons. We should search out, and seek to discover, and recover that important part of our ethnic past. Though we have never lived on a Reservation, or struggled and suffered the way our brothers and sisters in the west have, we still should lay hold of that great part of our heritage, embracing this wonderful piece of our ancestry.

Again, my plea is for us to embrace every part of who we are, to avoid division, and be proud of the fact that we are a mixed— new hybrid people in the New World.

About The Author:

Karlton Douglas lives in Ohio with his wife and daughter. He spent his summers growing up at his grandmother's home in Appalachia. Moderates the Melungeon Christians e-mail list. Is the author of two books: *Chronic Illness: Living With a Thorn*. And the fictional story: *Griffin Island*. He is on the devotional writing team of Rest Ministries. He has had

articles published in the Appalachian Quarterly magazine, and contributes articles to Angel Wings Magazine, web sites, and other E-zines. He is proud of his mixed ethnic hybrid status.

## VISITS TO THE MELUNGEONS AND TIDEWATER VIRGINIA GROUPS

By: W. GROSVENOR POLLARD

During a visit to my parents in Oak Ridge, Tennessee the summer of 1962, I was introduced to a juvenile probation officer who had been assigned Hancock and Hawkins counties in northern Tennessee as part of his jurisdiction. His supervisor had informed him that there were several communities of a "mixed-blood" people known as Melungeons and claiming an American Indian identity in those counties, with the major concentration being on Newman's Ridge, northeast of Sneedville, in Hancock County. He was to visit this community to determine how to proceed with rehabilitating potential Melungeon juvenile offenders.

Learning from my parents that I was a graduate student in anthropology at The University of Oklahoma, he asked if I would accompany him on the trip and conduct interviews with any Melungeons we met. I welcomed the opportunity. My companion first had to introduce himself to the sheriff in Sneedville, who informed us that, until about 1950, the Melungeons were rarely seen in any towns in the county except for quick trips for groceries or gasoline. Many Melungeon families were leaving Hancock and Hawkins counties for construction jobs in New Tazewell in neighboring Claiborne County. There were also several communities of Melungeons in Lee County, Virginia who were supposedly engaged in coal mining or logging.

Newman's Ridge is the second ridge northeast of Sneedville to the right of State Highway 33. We followed a dirt road along the foot of the ridge through a narrow valley, known locally as Skunk Hollow, and passed many young people with black hair and varying shades of bronze skin color before seeing the first house. This was the only house we saw on the right side of the road, opposite the foot of Newman's Ridge.

A woman came out and, after we introduced ourselves and told her why we had come, she informed us that she had been permanently banished from the Melungeon community on the ridge. She had been left with five young children to care for on a meager salary as a checker at a grocery in nearby Rock Hill when her first husband, a Melungeon, died. An African-American co-worker befriended her and helped care for her children. Other Melungeons had threatened her with banishment if she did not end the relationship, and made good on the threat when she and her friend married. The only way they would accept her back into the community was for her to divorce the man and never befriend another African-American.

Her banishment became irrevocable when she gave birth to a sixth child fathered by

her second husband. The reason is clearly that her marriage to an African-American and having a child with him could be seen as validating the claim of many local whites that the Melungeons were actually mulattos attempting to deny their Negroid ancestry by claiming to be American Indians. The entire community risked being branded with this stereotype if she was not expelled.

The poor woman recommended that we talk to her neighbor, a Mr. Bell, on the other side of the road. He and his father were said to be the most knowledgeable about the history of the community on the ridge. Mr. Bell identified himself and his family as American Indians, although no one had any idea what tribe, or tribes, they were descended from. He recognized that the Melungeons are not culturally distinct from their rural Appalachian white neighbors and was aware of the theory that the Melungeons are descended from shipwrecked Portuguese sailors who made their way inland. He said that this is an invention, borrowed from the so-called "Guineas" of West Virginia, and used by those with light complexions in the hope of marrying whites and producing children with even lighter complexions. The only hope for darker Melungeons, like Mr. Bell, was that the Tennessee State legislature would acknowledge their American Indian identity. But he recognized that there was little chance of this unless the group can prove descent from some tribe known to have inhabited Hancock County.

Mr. Bell's father, who was away on business, and one or two elderly women in Rhea County were the only Melungeons he knew of who spoke an American Indian language. The senior Mr. Bell and a visiting Cherokee from the Qualla Reservation in western North Carolina had found that language and Cherokee to be mutually unintelligible.

Asked if there were any customs he thought were possibly Indian, Mr. Bell said at least the Melungeons on Newman's Ridge built A-frame "chicken coops" about two feet high over the graves of family members. Every Memorial Day, gifts of food and water are left in these for the souls of the departed who might not have gone on "to their reward." My later investigation proved that this custom is a possible clue to the ancestry of the Melungeons. I knew that Cherokee territory in East Tennessee did not extend north of the French Broad River and was curious to know what Indians may have occupied land north of it before white settlement. I found the answer in John Reed Swanton's \*Indians of the Southeastern United States\*. Bulletin 137 of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, 1946.

Swanton reported that there were three bands of the Yuchi (Uchee or Euchee): a southern one centered near the present Macon, Georgia; a middle one near the present Talladega, Alabama; and a northern one centered on Newman's Ridge in Hancock County, Tennessee. The northern band were not among the Yuchi forced to relocate in Indian Territory in the 1830s. They were settled on the Qualla Reservation with the Eastern Cherokee band and allowed one representative on the tribal council. All deliberations were in Cherokee, which none of the Yuchi understood (understandable, since Cherokee belongs to the Iroquoian language stock and Yuchi to the Siouan one). After two years of feeling like strangers among the Cherokees, the Yuchi left and returned to Newman's Ridge.

Frank G. Speck, in his \*Ethnology of the Yuchi Indians\* (Anthropological Publications of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, no. 1, 1909), both describes and includes a photograph of the spirit houses the Yuchi in north-eastern Oklahoma erect over the graves of deceased family members. They appear to be the same

structures Mr. Bell called "chicken coops." This strongly suggests that, whatever other ethnic and genetic elements make up the Melungeons, the core group may well have been the northern band of the Yuchi.

A visit to the Chickahominy and Rappahannock in Tidewater Virginia in 1973 gave me several good reasons to think that the claim of a Negroid genotype in such racial isolates in the Eastern United States should be seriously downplayed. The Rappahannock in Caroline and Essex Counties were not as sensitive to this claim for reasons stated below. The slowness of rural school boards to desegregate the public schools and their attempts to place Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Upper Mattaponi (or Adamstown Indians), and Nansemond children in schools reserved for blacks threatened to invalidate any claims of these groups to an American Indian identity.

The Chickahominy are divided into two bands southeast of Richmond, a larger one in a rural area between Charles City and Providence Forge, and a smaller one centered in Providence Forge itself. They recognize that many African-Americans in the area have the same physical features they do and admit that this is perhaps the result of band members who fraternized with blacks being forced out of the group through ostracism. Chief Oliver O. Atkins of the larger band assured me that this had been a routine practice since the eighteenth century. He pointed out that many Mattaponi, descendants of Powhatan's tribe, are particularly sensitive to the claim that their dark brown complexions are proof of Negroid ancestry despite their obvious Caucasian or American Indian facial features and straight or curly (not kinky) hair. I told him I had read that the Mattaponi insist on marriage within the tribe, which he confirmed, and said that inbreeding among American Indians was known to cause darker complexions. Mattaponi women and a very dark Haliwa-Saponi from North Carolina my wife and I met when we attended the Chickahominy Fall Festival and Powwow in 1993 were aware of this and had used it as a defense against claims that they had Negroid ancestry.

Both Chickahominy bands, the Rappahannock, and the larger of two factions of the Nansemond had incorporated with the Commonwealth of Virginia as The Reorganized Powhatan Confederacy. Chief Atkins was well aware that the Chickahominy were never part of the original Powhatan Confederacy and that the Rappahannock were only allied with it on occasion. What these groups needed was a name both the state government and whites in the general population would associate with Indians who had lived in the Tidewater area in colonial times.

To further their claims to be American Indians, Chief Atkins, who was president of the Jamestown Association, involved members of all four groups in a powwow held annually Memorial Day weekend at the site of the Jamestown colony as a major tourist attraction. This had presented a problem: all remnants of the original Algonquin tribes in the Tidewater area lost their traditional culture and indigenous languages in colonial times. To demonstrate an American Indian identity, they had to borrow from other tribes which whites would recognize as "Indian." Thus, the regalia worn by the dancers is a mix of Eastern Woodland and Plains motifs. Canvas teepees are set up behind the stand where the master of ceremonies sat, despite the fact that the ancestors of the participants had lived in bark-covered longhouses.

This process of attempting to establish a separate ethnic identity by a group that has lost its distinctiveness from its neighbors is what anthropologists call "retribalization." It

requires the revival of some symbol of the group's original identity, which will be recognizable to the general population. The Chickahominy who organized dancers for powwows in the 1970s, Clifford Holmes, stated that the tribe's songs had been taught to one man in each generation, who was responsible for teaching them to a successor, since colonial times. They were all that had been preserved from the original culture.

When my wife and I attended the Chickahominy Fall Festival and Powwow in 1993, there were three wooden posts with carved faces in their tops at the center of the dance arena. Anyone familiar with drawings of Delaware or Secotan dances in colonial times will recognize such carved posts as a common trait of coastal Algonquins. Whether they were used by the aboriginal Chickahominy is immaterial. They are symbols that identify them with Indians who occupied the Tidewater area in colonial times, and this is their primary function. The two Chickahominy bands are among seven groups now recognized by the State of Virginia as American Indian tribes. They, the Nansemond, and the Monacans of Amherst hold annual powwows which draw a fair number of white spectators, and all seven groups hold an intertribal powwow in Richmond in November.

Captain Nelson, chief of the Rappahannocks in 1973, and his wife had some real surprises to tell. The group has a tradition of descent from the chief's namesake, a British officer who married the daughter of the Rappahannock chief sometime in the late 1600s. Although all legal documents relating to the group were lost when the Essex County Courthouse was destroyed in a fire in the early 1870s, there is no case in memory of a child born to a Rappahannock and an African-American. It is difficult to imagine there was much chance of an exception. Captain Nelson shared the surprising information that there had been a small Rappahannock community of two birch-bark-covered longhouses, each over 120 feet long, in thick woods only miles from his back door until after the Civil War. Mrs. Nelson had inherited a diary kept by a great aunt who had been a resident. Each longhouse was inhabited by a matrilineal clan (descent from a common ancestress through mothers only); whose members were obliged to marry members of the other clan. That is, the two clans were also moieties. Succession to leadership was from mother's brother to sister's son. The diary even included a vocabulary of some 300 words in the Rappahannock language or dialect.

How was it possible for an Indian tribe to preserve their traditional settlement pattern and aboriginal culture for so long and near the Rappahannock River, which was the scene of major battles between the Union and Confederate armies? One explanation is that the longhouse community was so isolated that outsiders may have been unaware of its existence. The impressive height of many Rappahannock men may have made any whites who saw them for the first time believe others who think they were deranged if they reported it. Captain Nelson remarked that the group had a basketball team made up of teenage boys all over seven feet tall! Captain Nelson's uncle had been the Indian giant (7'9") employed by the Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Circus in the 1940s and '50s. Mrs. Nelson placed a whole loaf of bread in a size 22 shoe the man had worn!

The longhouse community was abandoned after the Civil War, and the isolation of its residents ended as they experienced varying degrees of contact with whites and acculturation. The traditional culture described in the diary was gradually lost. There was one living medicine man who conducted traditional curing ceremonies and an annual rite surely associated with the aboriginal religion. The entire group gathered at a spring in rural Essex County, where the medicine man invoked a female spirit supposed to live at

the bottom and everyone tossed in small bundles of tobacco, red maize, and meat. The medicine man, who was said to be the only person able to speak Rappahannock, then prayed for bountiful crops and the health and prosperity of group members in the indigenous language. He was in his eighties and attempting to teach the language and traditional ceremonies to a grandson, who seemed more interested in basketball and girls. It seemed inevitable to the Nelsons that the elder's linguistic and ceremonial knowledge would die with him.

There were elders who had preserved traditional crafts, such as weaving oak-splint baskets, making bags consisting of chain-linked bracts from pine cones, and hand-made bows and arrows. They were using the group's American Baptist church to conduct classes for the young people. But the Nelsons feared this was not enough to give the Rappahannocks a sense of group solidarity. I suggested that it seemed the ceremony at the spring had been a focal point of this in the past. If some group members saw this ceremony as pagan, they could have a Christian prayer and praise service there after the medicine man dies without having trained a successor. Captain Nelson liked this idea and would propose it to the tribal council.

Readers who want a further understanding of retribalization among racial isolates in the Eastern United States might wish to see "Making a Middle Way: Problems of Monhegan Identity," by George L. Hicks and David I. Kertzer, \*Southwestern Journal of Anthropology\*, vol. 28 (Spring, 1972), pp. 1-24. Although the authors locate the "Monhegans" in southern New England, they specify that the name is their own invention to protect the privacy of group members.

About The Author:

W. Grosvenor Pollard and his wife live in Anadarko, Oklahoma. They have become very close with the Tribes of this area, especially the Kiowa Indians. They attend a Kiowa Church, and are associate members of a non-profit Kiowa organization. They gourd dance at Kiowa, Comanche, Plains Apache, and Wichita powows. Mr. Pollard has a B.A. from the College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio. He has an M.A. in Anthropology from the University of Oklahoma. He attended The University of Illinois, and The University of New Mexico as a candidate for a Ph.D. in Anthropology. He also has a Master of Science in Library Science, The University of Tennessee.

## **THE POWHATAN REMNANTS**

By: HELEN CAMPBELL

Prior to the white man's arrival in America, a chain of separate but interacting Algonquian communities thrived along the Atlantic coastline. The Indians thrived in communities from the Chesapeake to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. When warm weather arrived, the Indians used the coastline for fishing and hunting. In the southern regions Indians turned to the planting of crops for foodstuff. Some of the Southeastern Indians tribes became extinct almost immediately upon contact with the explorers from the Old World; the contact with the Indians was catastrophic because the foreign ships carried a plague of diseases. The Native Americans didn't have any immunity to the diseases, which resulted in epidemics and the deaths of millions of Native Americans. The first

African slaves were transported to the Americas in 1510 thus transmitting new diseases from Africa to the Native Americans. In 1551, the English voyagers reported that the Roanoke Islands' natives were dying by scores.

### **The First European Settlements**

In 1584, an Englishman, Walter Raleigh, led an expedition to look into Spanish defenses in the Caribbean Islands and to explore for a perfect site to build a new settlement. His men explored in Albemarle Sound and landed on the Virginia coastal island (now North Carolina), of Roanoke Island. In 1585, Walter Raleigh tried to establish a settlement on the newfound island. It was the ideal location to plant and grow wild sassafras, an herb prized for its medicinal qualities in England. Raleigh sailed back to England to purchase provisions for the coming winter. During a skirmish with the Indians, the settlers killed an Indian chief and the Indians were infuriated. This first group of immigrants abandoned the undeveloped settlement after a year when Sir Francis Drake rescued the settlement from disaster.

In the spring of 1586, an English fleet of twenty-five ships, under the command of Sir Francis Drake, sailed into the harbor. Drake was returning to England from his successful victory over the Spanish. In 1585, Drake and his mighty fleet went on a marauding expedition against the Spanish settlements. He and his men attacked major fortifications on the Spanish settlements in the West Indies, taking prisoners and anything of value. Then Drake sailed to Florida's Spanish fortifications at St. Augustine and plundered the settlement and took more captives.

The Spanish and Turks were constantly at war in the Mediterranean. The Spanish enslaved their Turkish, Portuguese, Arab and Moorish captives, to use them as galley slaves. These prisoners also did slave labor at Cartagena in the West Indies. Galley slaves were men who were enslaved or convicts who were severely punished for their illegal deeds by pulling the oars on galleys. Galleys were long ships with one deck and had twenty to thirty oars on each side. The ship was driven across the waters by the oars with six or seven men per oar.

When Drake offered the scared and stranded Roanoke settlers a safe passage home, they accepted. Drake had freed five hundred Ottoman (Turkish and Black Muslims), Levants (sailors), from their Spanish captors in the West Indies. Some researchers believe that Drake left about 500 Portuguese and South American captives on Roanoke Island. Drake had plans to ransom about one hundred Turks back to the Ottoman Empire.

Recent research suggests that Portuguese and Native Americans from South America were included in Drake's prisoners of war. Another two hundred came from an invasion on Spanish Florida, at St. Augustine. These captives were left on Roanoke Island to make room for the Roanoke settlers. They left the freed captives at the mercy of the infuriated Indians. Perhaps these men were absorbed into the American Indian population.

Drake was the first Englishman to sail around the world. In 1577 he left England aboard the Golden Hind and returned in 1580. Drake and his men raided Spanish settlements along the way. He presented the Queen with tropical plants, birds, gold, and American Indians. One of the Indian captives was an Aztec. Drake presented the illustrated log of his successful voyage to Queen Elizabeth. This top-secret log documented the voyage around the world. They were very careful that the illustrations

and maps didn't fall into enemy hands. Maps in this era were kept from the public they were available only to a select few.

In 1587, Raleigh sent replacements to reestablish the abandoned Roanoke settlement. The second group of about one hundred men, women and children began to rebuild Roanoke. The settlers needed provisions for the coming winter. John White, the governor of the settlement, sailed back to England to purchase the needed provisions. Governor White and his small crew departed leaving behind the settlers, including his daughter and his granddaughter, Virginia Dare. Virginia was the first English child to be born in America. Spain was at war with England, which prevented John White's speedy return to Roanoke. After three very long years, he managed to return in the year 1591. The settlers were nowhere to be found. There were no signs of battle, no bodies and no destruction of property. The only possible clue was the word "CROATAN" carved in a tree bark near the fort's entrance. On another nearby tree the bark was stripped off and carved into the tree the letters "CRO."

About one hundred miles inland, from Roanoke Island, and adjacent to the South Carolina border, was an area called Roberson County, North Carolina. In 1719, a group of hunters and trappers strayed into the hilly landscape and stumbled upon a tribe of Indians. The Indians had light skin, gray/blue eyes and light brown hair. But most astonishing was the fact that they spoke nearly perfect Elizabethan English. These Indians said that their ancestors "talked from a book." Their customs were similar to the early English Roanoke Colony. This sighting brought about a theory that the starving colonists at Roanoke took refuge with the Croatan Indians during the first winter when Governor John White didn't return. To this day the descendants still live in Roberson County, North Carolina. They are known as the Lumbee Indians. The surviving remnants of the Roanoke settlement may have been assimilated into the indigenous tribes. The existence of fair skinned Indians in Roberson, North Carolina substantiates the theory that the Roanoke colonists and perhaps the abandoned Turks and Portuguese and Moors blended in with the Croatan and other Tidewater, Virginia Indian tribes, including the Powhatan and Lumbee Indians. Dr. Robert Gilmer, a Melungeon researcher, suggests the people of the legendary "Lost Colony of Roanoke" intermarried with the Powhatan Indians who had already intermarried with Jamestown Colony. Adding the surnames White and Dare to the Indian population. Other surnames common to the Lumbee Indians are; Applewhite, Atkins, Braveboy, Bridger, Caldwell, Chavers and its variants, Cole, Cumbo and its variants, Cummings, Drake, Goins, and its variants, Humpreys/Humphrey, Kearsy, Kitchens, Locklear, Manuel, Morison, Moore, Mainer, Newsom, Oxedine, Ransom, Revels, Thompson, and Wood. The remnants of this mixed raced population were ultimately pushed together in the mountains of south-central Virginia, western North Carolina and upper South Carolina where they became known as the Tri-racial isolates.

### **The Spanish and the Powhatan**

The Powhatan came into contact with the Spaniards when Juan Ponce de Leon of Spain arrived at Florida during the years 1513-21. In 1513, Spain's explorers claimed Florida but they made no permanent settlement. A group of one hundred and fifty French Huguenots fleeing religious persecutions, settled on the St. Johns River in 1562. The

refugees built a fort on the St. Johns River and named the fort, Carolinefort. When Spain found out they sent a fleet to Florida under the command of Pedro Menendez de Aviles. Carolinefort was seized by Aviles and he renamed the fort, San Mateo. It is written that Aviles and his men massacred the French Huguenots; Only God knows if any of the French Huguenots from Carolinefort settlement found shelter amongst the local American Indians.

In 1566, Juan Pardo, a Spanish navy officer with Portuguese origins, strategically positioned five garrisons in the back country of Carolina. These soldiers were recruited from the mountains of Northern Spain and Portugal. Pardo led his expedition of two hundred soldiers into the interior of the southern Appalachians. Leaving small garrisons along the way. Each garrison was made up about fifty Spanish and Portuguese soldiers.

In 1566, the Spaniards built the town Santa Elena, a settlement with a small fort, Fort San Salvador. Santa Elena was built over the former settlement of the defeated French Huguenot refugees Charlesfort.

About twenty years later, the Spanish retreated from Santa Elena about the same time John White landed at Roanoke Island. Those settlers, who survived, burned the town and sailed south to St. Augustine. The garrisons in the back country of the Carolinas were cut off from their Spanish command post. These Spanish forts are thought to have been located near the present day cities of Rome, Georgia; Greenville, South Carolina; Asheville, North Carolina; and Johnson City, Tennessee. The remnants produced a mixed race population that inhabited the Deep South. The evidence suggests that the first Santa Elena settlers fled westward away from the coast of South Carolina. Then the displaced group traveled north along the Pee Dee River. The migrating remnants of the Portuguese, Moors and Spanish men may have intermarried with Indian women from various Southeastern Indian tribes.

Later Roman Catholic missionaries came to convert the Indians into Christians. Military garrisons protected these Roman Catholic missionaries. To finance the missions, the Spanish missionaries taught the Indians to manufacture raw material into products that could be sold. They also grew food crops to support the missions. The mission Indians dressed in Spanish fashion and they were taught to read, write and play musical instruments.

### **Virginia Tide Water Indians**

These first early attempts by European settlers in North America were no more than foot holds. As the European colonies along the Atlantic Coast grew, the few surviving Indians were forced off their ancestral lands and pushed inland. The remnants were left with no choice but to encroach on other Indian Nations' ancestral homelands. This led to warfare amongst the Native Nations for trespassing on other tribe's ancestral lands. The entire situation was a dilemma for all Native Americans. Coastal Indians swarmed the Indians in the inland seeking sanctuary. Some tribes resented the onslaught and killed or captured those who dared to trespass on their tribal lands. The people from the Old World had an advantage over the New World Indians, a lack of tribal unity. The Europeans would conspire to instigate such skirmishes among the many diverse ethnic Indian tribes.

The Powhatan and Pamunkey of Virginia were two of many Appalachian tribes speaking the Algonquian language. These Appalachian Indian tribes shared a common

culture, customs and had similar religious beliefs too. Other Eastern Algonquian tribes are Abenaki, Passamaquoddy, Pequot, Mohegan, Lenape, Nanticoke, Miami, Kickapoo, and Shawnee to name a few. Muskhogean Indians was another linguistic group of the Southeastern Indians and included the Creek, the Chickasaw, the Choctaw, the Seminole tribes and other smaller clans. But the Powhatans of Virginia consisted of many tribes and became a sizable powerful empire.

### **The Founder of the Powhatan Empire**

The “Powhatan” word is not the name of a particular tribe but rather a generic name for a group of Algonquian speaking tribes that formed an alliance. The man who gave the Powhatan Empire its actual foundation was a native Ruler in Virginia who is historically known by the name the Spanish gave him, Don Luis Valasco. One day, during the 1560s, the Spanish along the Virginia coast had abducted the teenage Pamunkey Ruler away from his homeland. While a captive of the Spanish, he was highly educated in Mexico, Madrid and Havana. Molding him into a "proper Christian Spaniard " Don Luis was to be an example for the other Indians to follow. In 1570, the Catholic priests brought their Spanish educated captive back to Virginia in the area of the York River. The Jesuits, along with the help of Don Luis, founded a mission for the Indians assuming their efforts would improve the relations between the Spanish and Indians. These Spanish priests thought they had an honorable plan to convert the Indians into Roman Catholics and then dominate their communities. Don Luis resumed his previous position as the ruler of his prominent family and King of his people. The Powhatan Indians believed in many deities, and although polygamy was practice it appears to have been uncommon. It is said that when Don Luis practiced polygamy, the Jesuit priests became enraged because Christianity denounces such practices. The Jesuits severely degraded and disgraced Don Luis in public, humiliating him in front of his people. Don Luis could not take this painful humiliation so he organized and led an attack and obliterated the mission he had helped to build. Three Jesuits were spared, Rogel, Alonso and Carrera. The Spanish retaliated the following year by massacring many Indians.

### **Jamestown**

To understand the history of the Powhatan and Pamunkey Indians, one has to understand the history of the English settlement at Jamestown. Modern historians number the Native population of 1607 Tidewater Virginia at 13,000 to 14,000. Powhatan villages were thick along the rivers. By 1669, the estimated population of the Powhatan Tidewater in Virginia had dropped to about 1,800 and by 1722; many of the tribes belonging to King Powhatan were reported extinct. Many tribes lost their reservations lands assigned to them and some of these displaced Indians tried to adapt to Colonial America. Those who could pass as white were absorbed into the European population. Those who couldn't pass for white fled their lands to escape enslavement.

The English mercantile shareholders believed that precious metals existed in the Americas. They spent about ten thousand dollars to send three groups of emigrants to settle the New World. The first voyage set sail from England just before Christmas,

December 20 in the year 1606. The convoy left England aboard three ships that carried about 105 colonists and supplies for their journey across the ocean. The sponsors of this New World voyage expected these colonists to develop business enterprises. Some of the colonists were skilled in silk making, glass making and other skills. The spirited people embarked on a new venture to a New World with dreams of finding prosperity.

The names of the ships were, the *Susan Constant*, the *Godspeed* and the *Discovery*. The three ships sailed into the Chesapeake Bay in 1607 and named their English settlement Jamestown, in honor of their king, King James I. Jamestown was located on the confluence of the James and Chickahominy Rivers. Jamestown became the first permanent English settlement in the New World.

They were not prepared for the hardships that lay ahead of them. Diseases, malnutrition, poor organization and environmental ignorance all play a part to the large numbers of deaths in Jamestown. One main problem was they built the town on swampland and soon became plagued by malaria and distasteful drinking water. All these harsh conditions resulted in bad blood among the men and endless quarreling over how to stay alive. But the major crisis was a lack of food supplies. Jamestown settlement almost starved to death and would have if not for the support of the Powhatans during their first terrible winter in 1607-1608. The Powhatans were initially friendly to the English colonists. Many Englishmen married women from the various tribes living in the area. John Rolfe and Pocahontas are the most remembered because Pocahontas was an Indian princess, the favorite daughter of King Powhatan. By the spring of 1608, disease and accidents had taken all but 38 of the one hundred and five men who had come to Jamestown so full of hope the year before.

The Powhatans and Pamunkey Indians were under constant pressure to provide food for the English. This became a serious problem after the settlement grew. In 1609 England sent four hundred English immigrants to reinforce the original group at Jamestown. But the town relied on trade with the local Indians for their food supplies. The new group didn't bring enough food provisions for themselves. The English were too frightened of the environment to go out and hunt for food in the forest. When deep winter arrived, the helpless colonists were eating rats and mice along with dried up roots. A few of the most desperate turned to cannibalism and even opened fresh graves for food.

Within several years after the establishment of Jamestown conflicts between the Indians and the English settlements had reached a breaking point. In 1610, the Appamattock, Arrowhatecks, and the Weyanocks, tried to expel the English settlers from further encroachment. The Nansemond attacked the English settlement along the James River. The major culprit in the conflict was tobacco, a harvest that was addicting and had immense popularity in Europe. The Jamestown settlers realized the addictive tobacco crops were a way to make a fortune. Thus began the large-scale cultivation of tobacco. In 1612 John Rolfe introduced a tropical tobacco from Trinidad and by 1614 the first Virginia tobacco was being sold in London. After five years it was Jamestown's leading export. As the Virginia Colony expanded farther inland, the Powhatans and Pamunkey Indians were forced off of their ancestral lands.

To cultivate tobacco the Englishmen required huge tracts of land, more so than other crops because the tobacco plants depleted the soil at a rapid rate. There was of course, in Englishmen's eyes, plenty of land in Coastal Virginia but the region was heavily wooded and full of unfriendly Indians. So the English implemented a plan to seize the fields that

the Indians had already cleared for their own survival thus began the mass departure process of pushing tribes farther and farther inland. These tribes were pushed out of the Tidewater area of Virginia and Maryland. The estimated population of Powhatan Indians was 9,000 in the year 1600. By the late 18th century the Tidewater Indians had nearly disappeared as a result of warfare, disease, and intermarriage with Africans, Europeans and the assimilation amongst other Indian tribes.

Robert Rich, a very influential man, was an investor to the Bermuda Company and the East Indian Company, and also the Guineas Company, which traded primarily in African slaves. The name of his ship was The Treasurer, and his ship brought the first cargo of twenty Africans to Virginia in 1619 establishing the way for the establishment of slavery in English America. These twenty Africans are recorded as being the first of 10,000 other captives who came to the American Colonies in the 17th century. Their languages were of the Niger-Congo family. These unfortunate African captives had religious and cultural traditions. They were skilled in the cultivation of, tobacco, rice and indigo. These skills completed the foundation for the Tidewater economy in Carolina and Georgia. In South Carolina, over forty percent of African slaves came from the rice growing area of Upper Guinea and Senegambia. Another forty percent came from Angola. The Chesapeake area Africans came from the Bight of Biafra controlled by the Ibo people. Many of these enslaved African people intermarried with the Powhatan Indians.

In Africa, the slave trade was connected to warfare among rival kingdoms. The victorious forces brought back captives as spoils. Often these unfortunate captives were sold or traded from one ruler to another as well as to European traders. The African Rulers valued the European's trading merchandise. These captives were packed into ships and sent into the world slave market. By 1725, the African population in the Chesapeake area numbered forty-five thousand.

Africans were imported to fill the requirements for laborers when English cultivators found that they could not force Indians to work in their fields. The first Africans were indentured servants, and they worked on tobacco plantations alongside white indentured laborers. But as the number of Africans in North America grew, the plantation owners began to fear their potential power and implemented regulations, which made slaves of these African indentured servants.

### **Sold into Slavery**

The French, English and Spanish all carried on extensive trade in Indian as well as African slaves. The Spanish were dominant in slave trade early on. In 1675, there were only 4000 Africans scattered across Maryland and Virginia; in 1708, there were just 4000 in Carolina. West Indian natives worked beside Africans in the West Indies on sugar plantations. In Virginia captive Powhatans and other Indian tribes were put to labor in the English tobacco plantations. Slavery of the Indians in the Southeast tribes was difficult. After all it was their ancestral lands and this gave them an edge. But the settlers had weapons that put them at an advantage.

The English needed armed forces to hold off the Spanish settlement in the New World. Pine, oak, cypress and cedar trees grew plentiful along the Carolina coastline. This gave the British navy an endless source of supplies to build a navy base in the New World. Cutting down these trees and boiling tar required a multitude of workers to

complete the hard backbreaking work. The English tried to enslave the Indians to do the arduous labor. Most Indian slaves were war captives who had been spared from death. Eventually some of these captive Africans and Indians were accepted into another tribe by adoption and marriage.

To satisfy the demand for slaves European traders encouraged Indians to wage war against one another for the captives. Afterwards, the Southeastern Indians would be exchanged for trade goods or money. Pitting tribe against tribe not only produced slaves for the market but also reduced the threat of Indians would unite in large numbers against the white population.

The English raiding gangs from Carolina besieged thousands of Appalachian Indians including the Timucus, who had been converted to Christianity and were taught to be farmers by the Spanish missions in the 16th century. These merciless men made shocking assaults on the Christian farming towns in Northern Florida. The purpose of these raids were to seize the sedentary Indians and ship them back to the Carolina slave markets where they were sold into slavery and deported to the West Indies and New England. As a result of such raids, as many as 12,000 American Indians had been auctioned off and deported out of Charleston to the Caribbean Islands in the West Indies. Some of these Native Americans were shipped to Africa too. It was a profitable market and many European men became wealthy and dominant.

After slavery was established at the port of Charles Town, later named Charleston, slaves entered in a steady stream. It was usual to see an advertisement for slave auctions. One such poster read: "To be sold, on Thursday the third day of August next, a cargo of ninety-four prime, healthy, Negroes, consisting of thirty-nine men, twenty-four women, and sixteen girls, just arrived, in the Brigantine Dembia. Francis Bare Mafter from Sierra Leon, by David and John Deas." Other slave ports were; New Orleans; Savannah; New York, Boston and Newport. Those bought and sold on the auction block of Charleston were shipped off in wretched bunches to New England or the West Indies.

In 1670, Barbados sent cultivators who were very experienced with African slavery, to the Carolinas to help establish plantations. They brought with them the first slaves both Black and White. Also, the settlement's proprietor had an economic interest in the slave trade and was very pleased to find such a market as existed in the Carolinas. Barbadians had been enslaving the Indians to work on sugar plantations since the Pequot War in 1637. Pequot Indians were one of many Algonquian tribes. The Puritans parsons, who called the Pequot Indians "friends of hell, and children of Satan," incited the war. The outraged settlers stormed the Pequot village located on the Mystic River in Connecticut, massacring and burning to death more than six hundred Indians. Surviving captives became slaves of New England settlers; others sold to West Indies sugar plantations. Thus began the mass deportation of the American Indians out of their ancestral homelands to a life of slavery in the West Indies.

### **Chief Powhatan - Wahunsonacook 1550s-1618**

It is not certain but probable that Don Luis was the father of Wahunsonacook, born in the 1550's and later became the legendary Chief Powhatan of the Powhatan Confederacy. The English called Wahunsonacook, Chief Powhatan, King of the Powhatans. Wahunsonacook was a member and chief of the Pamunkey Indians. The Pamunkey were

the largest of the many Virginia Tidewater tribes. Their political system was Chiefdom, a sovereignty and supreme power with a king and a province. Some researchers have written, that Wahunsonacock inherited the Chiefdoms of the Powhatans, Arrowhateck, Appamattock, Pamunkey, Mattaponi, and the Chiskiak Indians.

The Powhatans lived in a 9,000 square mile area. Chief Powhatan and his people lived on the North side of the James River in Henrico County. It was a custom for the Ruler of the Powhatans to acquire the name of the tribe, thus Chief Powhatan.

There were hundreds of Indian villages near the Chesapeake Bay. The inlets and rivers that flow into the Chesapeake Bay, were vital, they were used for transportation and were a major source of food. The rivers and bay provided the Indians with an abundant source of fish, oysters, clams and waterfowl. The Powhatan villages were strategically placed enabling the Indians to have a commanding view of the waterways and the people traveling them, especially their enemies. Historian James Mooney estimated the Powhatan population at nine thousand Indians in the sixteen hundreds and by the end of the eighteenth century they had nearly disappeared as a result of warfare, disease, and inter-marriage with Africans and Europeans. Some were fortunate enough to be adopted among other Indian tribes thus becoming another mixed raced people. In 1685 the Powhatans were said to be extinct, but in reality their survivors continued to move inland, intermarrying with other mixed-race exiled people. In 1691 a law was made to end the intermarriage of Whites to Indians and Blacks. The remnants of this mixed raced population eventually fled to the isolated mountains in the Southeast.

The English settlers began to transform the forests into tobacco plantations ruining the hunting grounds by massive deforestations; forever changing the Virginia Indian lands to cultivate the addicting tobacco plantations. The once plentiful food supply became nearly extinct, leaving the Indians without a means of survival. King Powhatan ordered about forty warriors to permanently expel the settlers from his province for what they had done to the Indian lands.

One day Chief Powhatan implemented a plan that united thirty or more Algonquian speaking tribes of coastal Virginia and Maryland into one single province ruled by Powhatan and his family. The alliance was well known as the all-powerful Powhatan Confederacy. King Powhatan extended the name to all the tribes within his newly united province. The capital of his province was located on the modern day Pamunkey River in Virginia. King Powhatan named the capital of his province, Werowocomoco. The settlement was located on the north bank of the York River.

The earliest estimate of Powhatan-Pamunkey-Chickahominy people was 40,000. The Pamunkeys united with Powhatan. They lived near West Point Virginia. The Pamunkeys are the first Indians that Englishman Captain John Smith encountered. They had an estimated three hundred warriors. Other tribes that united with Powhatan are: Mattoponis, this tribe lived on the banks of the Mattoponis River, they had about forty warriors, (they still live in King County); the Arrohatecks lived on the Appomattox River in Chesterfield County, and had about sixty warriors; the Youghtatucks, they lived on the Pamunkey River probably in Hanover County and they had only seventy surviving people; the Weanocks of Charles City, Prince George and Surrey counties; the Paspaheghs of James City and Charles County; the Orzinies of the north bank of the Chickahominy River in James City County; the Chickahominy of Chickahominy River in New Kent County; the Tappahannas of Surry and Prince George Counties; the

Warascoyacks of the Isle of Wright; the Nansemond of Nansemond County (now Nansemond City, Isle of Wright and Southampton Counties); the Chesapeakes of Norfolk County (now the City of Chesapeake and Prince Anne County); the Kecoughtans of Elizabeth City County (now City of Hampton); the Werowocomocos of Gloucester County; the Kiskiacks of the south side of the York River. The Rappahannock of the north side of the Rappahannock River; the Tauxent of Fairfax County and Stanford Counties; the Potomac of the Potomac River; the Mattapanients of the Potomac River; the Nanticoke of the eastern shore of Maryland; the Accowmack of Northampton and the Pawtuxents and other small tribes that lived on the Patuxent River.

Opechancano the brother of King Powhatan became the king of the Powhatan Confederacy after his brother's death in 1618. He led an attack on the Virginia colonies in 1622. The attack was a complete surprise to the English settlements and back woods plantations along the James River. The Indians massacred over three hundred men, women and children. Every one of the settlements and plantations was destroyed and burned, except for Jamestown. This was the commencement of warfare that lasted for fourteen years. The remnants of the Virginia Indians were finally forced to make peace in 1636. But six years later, Opechancano, King of the Powhatans, launched another surprise attack. More than five hundred English settlers were massacred in another surprise attack in the back-country. Each time the English retaliated severely. Opechancano died in 1644 in captivity. The Powhatans again were forced to make peace with colonies. The oldest treaty written in this land is with the Powhatan Nations in the year 1646. The King of England declared the area between the York and James Rivers for English colonies.

### **The Powhatan Reservation**

Small reservations were set aside for the exclusive residence and use of the once great Powhatan Empire. These Virginia reserves have been more reduced over the centuries. The lands remain in Native ownership to this day.

### **Our Melungeon Forefathers**

The Melungeon peoples could be the remnants of North America's very first Old World explorers and settlements. Only the indigenous people were here to record the early voyagers arrivals. The majority of the indigenous people of the Americas died soon after their first contact with the explorers. These first Old World contacts lead the way for the extinction of many millions who witnessed the foreigners' arrivals. In this new millennium we only have clues to remind us of our forefathers. Such clues can be found in the oral histories of the American Indians, in their language, in their customs, in their music, in their dance, in their traditional fashions, and the westerly migratory path of the Melungeons. After many centuries the genetics of these earliest forefathers still remain within the Melungeons. God has preserved a written record of our forefathers' existence; the evidence can be found in the chemical makeup and the physical features that have been passed on to their descendants over the centuries. The Melungeons truly are God's mysterious peoples.

Elder, Pat Spurlock. (1999). *Melungeons: Examining An Appalachian Legend*. Continuity Press.

Erdoes, Richard, and Ortiz, Alfonso. (1984). American Indian Myths and Legends. Pantheon Books, a division of Random House, Inc.

Graff, Henry Franklin and Krout, John A. (1959, 1960). The Adventure of the American People. Rand McNally

Kennedy, N. Brent. (1994). The Resurrected Melungeon, The Resurrection of a Proud People, An untold Story of Ethnic Cleansing in America. Mercer University Press.

Kennedy, N. Brent. (May 21, 2000) Lecture at the Third Union at the University of Virginia College at Wise. Recorded by Wayne Winkler, Director, WETS-FM

The Reader's Digest Association, Inc. (1995). Through Indian Eyes. The Reader's Digest Association, Inc.

Hornbeck, Helen Tanner (Ed.). (1995). The Settling of North America. Swanston Publishing Limited.

Salazar, L. E. (200) Love Child: A Genealogist Guide to the Social History of Barbados. Family Find.

## **The Legendary Princess Pocahontas**

By: HELEN CAMPBELL

King Powhatan had children one of whom was Matoka, later the English called Princess Pocahontas and "Lady Rebecca." She was born in the year 1594, at Werawocomoco (present day Wicomico, Gloucester County, Virginia) on the north side of the York River area. The York River was once called the Pamaunkee River.

In 1610, she married a Native tribal leader, Kocoum but the marriage was brief after three years Kocoum passed away. Little is known about the first marriage of Pocahontas. In 1614, the English Captain Samuel Argall captured Pocahontas. He planned to exchange her for concessions from her father, King Powhatan. While a captive, she stayed in the home of a minister and was treated kindly. Pocahontas converted into a Christian and was given the name Rebecca at her baptism.

Pocahontas married a second time to John Rolfe, an Englishman born in Heacham, Norfolk, England in 1585. They were married on April 5, 1614. Virginia governor Sir Thomas Dale and her father King Powhatan blessed the marriage. The marriage brought several years of peace between the Powhatans and the colonists at Jamestown. When they married some objections were expressed in London against the union of a commoner with an Indian princess. Nowadays several of the "first families of Virginia" proudly trace their descent from the marriage of John and Pocahontas.

Ever since the colonial days great numbers of Indians have been assimilated into America life and millions of Americans have some Indian blood. During her brief existence on earth, Pocahontas became a representative for the Powhatan people. In 1616, John Rolfe and Pocahontas went to England in search of sponsors to seek funds for the development of tobacco plantations at Jamestown. "Lady Rebecca" was presented as a Christian Indian Princess and was dressed in the finest European fashions. She became the center of attention and attended many banquets given in her

honor. King James I and the London Society received “Lady Rebecca” with royal honor. Her diplomacy strengthened the alliance between the English and the Powhatans.

After seven-months of touring, in March 1617, the Indian Princess Pocahontas along with her son and husband, embarked on the ship “George” to return to Virginia. But, she became gravely ill with an Old World illness. Pocahontas, the peacemaker, “Lady Rebecca” died at Gravesend, England at age twenty-one. She was buried in a burial chamber beneath the chancel chapel of the St. George parish.

The couple had one son Thomas Rolfe; he was born in 1615 at Smith’s Fort Plantation in Virginia. Thomas was sent to England for his education. He returned to Virginia in 1640 when he was about the age of twenty-five. He became a militia officer and commanded a frontier fort in western Henrico on the James River. He became a wealthy landowner. Several Virginia families claim descent from his descendants. Thomas died 1675 in Virginia.

### **The Lost Colony**

In 1584, an Englishman named Sir Walter Raleigh sent explorers to search for land in America that would be perfect to cultivate sassafras. The herb was used for medicinal purposes and for its flavor too. The explorers located an island off the coast of Virginia. In the year 1585, a ship sailed to the land the explorers located. The Englishman John White, the governor, named the colony Roanoke. Sir Francis Drake ransacked the Spanish settlements in the West Indies and New Spain. Drake stopped by Roanoke Colony and the colonists wanted to go back to England. Those who went on the voyage with White are; Unknown Acton, Allyne, Philip Amadas, John Anwike, William Backhouse, Edward Barecombe, Dennis Barnes, Valentine Beale, Silvester Beching, Robert Biscombe, Philip Blunt, Thomas Bookener, Joseph Borges, John Brocke, John Cage, John Chanderler, Vuncent Cheyne, Edward Chipping, Geffery Churchman, Erasmus Clefs, Marmaduke Constable, John Costigo, Rice Courtney, Roger Deane, George Eseven, John Evans, William Farthow, John Fever, Thomas Fox, Dougham Gannes, Humprey Garden, Unknown Gardiner, Richard Gilbert, Darby Glande, Rowland Griffyn, Unknown Hariot, Bennett Harrie, John Harris, Thomas Harvey, Thomas Heskit, Robert Holecroft, Thomas Hulme, Richard Humfrey, Richard Ireland, Edward Kelly, Unknown Kendall, Edward Ketchman, Edward Kettell, James Lacie, Roger Large, Randall Latham, John Linsey, Christopher Lowde, Thomas Luddington, Matthew Lyne, Jeremie Man, Christopher Marshall, Unknown Marvyn, James Mason, Randall Mayne, Walter Mill, William Millard, Francis Norris, Edward Nugen, Thomas Parre, Thomas Phillips, William Phillips, Michael Polison, Stephen Pomarie, Richard Poore, Henry Potkin, Unknown Predeox, William Randes, Philip Robins, Hugh Roger, Thomas Rottenbury, Anthony Russe, David Salter, Richard Sare, Edward Seclemore, Thomas

Skevelabs, James Skinner, Thomas Smart, Unknown Smolkin, Unknown Snelling, Edward Stafford, Charles Stephenson, James Stephenson, John Taylor, Thomas Taylor, William Tenche, John Twit, Unknown Vaughan, Hance Walters, William Walters, William Wasse, William White, Francis Whitton, and David Williams.

### **The Lost Colonist of 1587**

The English didn't give up on Roanoke Island, in 1587, another group left bound for America. These people were filled with hope and dreams of making a colony in the New World. The group of 1585 had learned a lot about the environment on the island. They were confident that they could build a prosperous settlement. The entire colony vanished with only clues as to where they went; somebody carved the letters "CROATAN" on a tree near the fort. The names of the colonist lost to history are; Maurice Allen, Arnold Archard, Joyce Archard, Thomas Archard, Richard Arthur, Roger Bailey, Mark Bennett, William Berde, Henry Berry, Richard Berry, Bishop Michael, John Borden, John Bridger, John Bright, John Brooke, Henry Browne, William Browne, John Burdon, Thomas Buttler, Anthony Cage, Alice Chapman, John Chapman, John Chevin, William Clement, Thomas Coleman, Unknown Colman, Christopher Cooper, John Cotsmur, Ananias Dare, Eleanor Dare, Richard Darige, Henry Dorrell, William Dutton, John Earnest, Robert Ellis, Thomas Ellis, Elizabeth Glane, Margery Harvie, George Howe, Thomas Humfrey, Jane Jones, James Lasie, Margaret Lawrence, Peter Little, Robert Little, William Lucas, Jane Mannering, George Martyn, Emma Merimoth, Michael Myllet, Henry Mylton, Humprey Newton, William Nichols, Henry Paine, Hugh Patterson, Rose Payne, Thomas Phevens, Jane Pierce, Edward Powell, Winifred Powell, John Prat, Roger Prat, Henry Rufoote, Jane Sampson, John Sampson, Thomas Scott, Richard Shabedge, Thomas Smart, Thomas Smith, William Sole, John Spendlove, John Starte, Thomas Stevens, John Stillman, Martyn Sutton, Audrey Tappan, Richard Taverner, Clement Taylor, Hugh Taylor, Richard Tompkins, Thomas Topan, John Tydway, Ambrose Viccars, Elizabeth Viccars, Thomas Warner, Joan Warren, William Waters, Cuthbert White, John White, Richard Wildye, Robert Wilkinson, and William Willes.

Broderbund Family Archive #354, Ed. 1, Passenger and Immigration Lists Index.

#### About The Author:

Helen Campbell was born in 1955 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Helen and her husband Tom live in the Pittsburgh area. They have two grown children and four grandchildren.

## MELUNGEON MEMORIES

By: THOMAS McELWAIN

My grandmother, Evy Mullins, was often reticent about anything in her family that might suggest being not quite White. But there was no hiding it, and once she got to talking, there was plenty to say. She was quite willing to admit to having Indian ancestry, as long as it was not part of that "old dark bunch of Bus's." Bus was her son-in-law, against whom she held his regular visits to the Redman, a place where spirits ran high.

I have no idea if my grandmother's mother was Melungeon or not. The Mullinses certainly were. My grandmother's dad's first wife was Ellie Ann Crane, and the Cranes were Melungeons too so far as I know. Ellie Ann married my great granddad Bill Mullins. Bill Mullins was known to be wild. He called himself Wild Bill Mullins, and John Mullins, his father, and a paragon of virtue, had a lot to do to keep him in order. Bill Mullins celebrated July four by riding through town drunk, shooting. They say people stayed inside. Old John Mullins caught Bill sparking with Ellie Ann by picking up a heel Bill lost off his boot and confronting him with it. I do not know whether the righteously indignant John forced them to marry, or whether it was their own choice, but marry they did and had several children before Ellie Ann left Bill for the last time.

Bill and Ellie Ann would get to scrapping, and she would say "I came to this house with a cow and hoe, and that's how I'm leaving." Then she would take a cow and a hoe and go off to her brother's. After a few days they would cool down, and she would be back, but always without the cow and the hoe. One time while she was gone Bill filed for divorce and then married my great grandmother Springer. Ellie Ann always treated my grandmother and her brothers and sisters just like her own. Why she even hid my great uncle out once when he was running from the law.

Of course John Mullins had had his moments too. They say there was a big freedman in Pike County, Kentucky right after the war who would run every white man he met off the boardwalk into the mud. Now the mud was deep in those days. John Mullins said he would shoot him if he ever tried to do it to him. He said that to warn him off, but it did not do any good. He ended up shooting the man dead. When we children heard the story we asked our grandmother if he didn't get in trouble for shooting the man. "Sh-t no" she said. "They was glad to git rid of him." That is the only time I heard her say a bad word. The Mullinses were Baptists, or at least pretended to be.

John Mullins lived a dangerous life in Pike County. Eventually they had to go back to West Virginia because of the Hatfield and McCoy affair. They were related to the Hatfields and no longer welcome in Pike County. There was another family of freedmen that lived right near the Mullins place in Pike County. They had a son that was always hitting them up for money to drink with. I don't know if they didn't have any money, or if they just refused to give it to him. Anyway, the two old folks came up to the Mullins place in the middle of the day and said the boy had cut off their ears and run off. They had their ears on a napkin they were carrying along. Grandma rang the dinner bell and everybody came running in from the fields. They went off after the boy and caught him and hung him right there where they caught him. His ma and pa were begging them not to kill him, but they figured it was good riddence of poor meat, and would save a lot of liquor to boot.

There was a woman John Mullins helped. She took in a lot of kids that didn't have a home, and she was known to be friendly with gentlemen who occasionally dropped by. They were having a revival at the church and somebody got to saying they had to clean up the community. So they all rode out to the woman's place, where they planned to give her a kerosene bath to put the fear of God in her. John Mullins got wind of it and rode out there with a rifle. He got there in time to stop it and said "Now a good many of you men have been here to see her under other pretences, and you can leave her alone now. And I want to know that her smokehouse is full of meat from now on, because if it isn't, I know who you are." They say she had meat from then on and didn't need to do any favors anymore to get it, either. I guess they figured John Mullins meant what he said.

That could be from the way he treated that corn thief. He noticed corn was missing from the corn crib, so he put a trap in it. It wasn't long till they heard somebody yelling one morning early. They all got out of bed and ran out. There was a man with his hand caught in the trap. Grandma and the girls were all crying to let him loose, but Grandpa Mullins just walked past him to the barn and milked the cows and let him scream. When he finished, he filled a sack with corn and put it on the man's horse. Only then did he let him go, and told him not to come back. Well, at least he got his corn.

But they had to come back to West Virginia. I asked my grandmother how they traveled, because I realized there were no cars in those days. I guess there was the train, though. She said "We walked." I don't suppose it was too much over a hundred miles. They settled on Brown's Mountain and my grandmother ended up marrying my grandfather. He was married to her best friend, Mary Crow, but Mary died of childbirth. Evy Mullins was engaged to one of the Cogger boys, I believe, and was sitting in the parlor with him. The house was built around the fireplace, and there was a wall dividing the fireplace for the two rooms. My grandfather and Woodie Mullins threw a skunk over that wall. That wasn't enough to discourage the Cogger boy, though. Finally my grandfather got the Cogger boy drunk and Evy Mullins left him. The Coggers and McElwains were Methodists and took a drink now and then. But Evy Mullins was a Baptist, and she wasn't going to have anything to do with a boy that drank. Now dipping snuff was another thing. Her dad did that, and he was a decent as they come.

I came along on the tail-end of the old life. In the 1950s there were still a few old people in the hills who could talk Indian. They weren't too open about it, but they would open up to a kid, especially a kid that followed old people around and didn't ask for money. So I learned quite a bit of what they had to say. Indian words and stories about ghosts mostly, it was. The last one I ever heard talking Indian was Grandma Mullins in 1967, and I don't know if she was even Mellungeon or not. If she wasn't, she lived with them all her life and learned the language from somewhere. People along the Tygart River, the Cheat River, and the south fork of the Potomac used to use Indian language among themselves, but not to outsiders. And what they did talk was Iroquois, they called it Seneca or Mingo. But if you asked them about the Indian times, they would tell you about the days before the Iroquois, when people lived on hunting and picking up acorns.

They didn't think of Iroquois things, like gardening, as Indian at all. The real Indian ways were freer, when you didn't need to own land. You could take acorns and crack them between two rocks. Then you put them whole, shells and all, into water and wood ashes for the night. By morning they would be all swollen up and you could take the

shells off easily and make meal out of them. Of course you had to wash the lye away and add something for taste. There wasn't any taste left after that treatment.

Aunt Virgie was the one who wanted to be Indian and nothing else. She looked the part, though, and she sounded the part too with her language. And she could tell the best ghost stories of anyone around, as well as the stories about the little people that lived under the rocks and the headless horse that rose up out of the pond on full moon nights with a real Indian warrior riding on its back. We all believed everything she said, though I doubt some of it now. She said before the settlers came they didn't have anything to eat but Algonquians, and they were stringy. But when the settlers came there was good, pork-fed meat to be had. Even now, she said, she would rather eat a white dog any day than a brown one.

Her brother was more interested in being Turkish than Indian, although he would admit to a Cherokee grandmother. He also tried to pass himself off as a relative of mad Anthony Wayne. There is no record of any of it. He did acquire a water-pipe from somewhere. There is not much to go on to know what these people actually were, aside from the marriage records and the German and Scots-Irish names. But they always claimed to be Indian, and sometimes even spoke Indian. And once in a while they mentioned a Turkish ancestor.

The Mullinses kept up some secrets, though, that raise more questions than they provide answers. Bill Mullins followed his father's practice of keeping Saturday for the Sabbath. This was before the days of Adventists. The Seventh Day Baptists came to West Virginia in 1792, but the Mullinses never joined them, never had anything to do with them aside from going to church once in a while. They had their own religion that wasn't quite Christian, wasn't quite Jewish, and was hauntingly reminiscent of Islam, not that they ever claimed to be Muslims. They would get together as a family around the fire on Friday evenings and tell stories. And later when there were people that could read and had a book, read the Psalms. Bill Mullins said his father told about the time that they didn't have calendars, but notched a stick every evening, so they would know when the Sabbath came. That was before the settlers ever got here.

Genealogy is not my cup of tea. My thing is listening to the old people. I am not far from becoming one of the old people myself now. What can I pass on? Some old stories and some Indian words are all I know personally. And the watching the sky for the Sabbath and the New Moon, and opening the Psalms of a Friday night. And suspicion of churches and preachers. And holding the iron integrity of the mountain people. And wondering, sitting on the porch of an evening, why some people in the family have such names as Tunis and Calendar.

A few years ago I met a young man from Turkey who invited me to visit him in his village on the banks of the Euphrates River. I was surprised to meet his little brother and hear that his name was Kalendar. I asked where the name came from. They said a Kalendar is the one who takes the shoes and keeps them when you go into a mosque. But it also means an order of dervishes, people who wander through the mountains alone, and have their own religion. "Is that so?" I said. "There is a distant relative of mine with that name. We always thought he was an Indian, though."

There is good documentation that the Eckerlin brothers were moving about in the area of West Virginia up until 1756. They had been expelled from the Ephrata Cloisters for their "Ishmaelite" faith. Considering that they observed Saturday and had other practices

similar to those handed down in my family, I would not consider it improbable that they had some contact with each other. The Eckerlins were rather missionary-minded, but it is possible that such contact was based on similarity of belief and practice between the two groups, rather than that the Melungeons got their faith from the Eckerlins. Almost my sole reason for saying so is the tradition of marking a stick to keep track of time. That implies something more ancient, more primitive, and more deprived. The configuration of Bible and Sabbath does not necessarily imply Jewish roots, although the flight from Spain included Jews as well as Muslims and even heterodox Christians. Any combination of these three could be implied. The Judaism and Islam in the Spain of 550 years ago was quite different in many respects from what we think of as Judaism and Islam today. Furthermore, some unidentified syncretic or mystical society might have come into play. Although my family has not handed down a tradition including the words Moorish or Portuguese, only Indian and far more rarely Turkish, I would not discount an Iberian origin of the practices passed down.

About The Author:

Thomas McElwain is Associate Professor of Comparative Religion from the University of Stockholm, where he did a dissertation on Seneca story-telling in 1979. He has written a book in the same series, *Our Kind of People*, about the Melungeon community near Philippi, West Virginia.

**ENIGMATIC “BLACKFOOT” IDENTIFICATIONS  
EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI**

**and the**

**SIOUAN TRIBES  
of the  
VIRGINIA/NORTH CAROLINA PIEDMONT**

By: LINDA KERES CARTER

Tutelo* :	English:
<b>Isi</b>	<b>foot</b>
asépi, asúp	black
Isi’asepi	Blackfoot

Sissipaha - A former small tribe of North Carolina, presumably Siouan, from their alliance and associations with known Siouan tribes. They must have been an important tribe at one time, as Haw River, the chief head stream of Cape Fear river, derives its name from them, and the site of their former village, known in 1728 as Haw Old Fields, was noted as the largest body of fertile land in all that region. It was probably situated about the present Saxapahaw on Haw River, in the lower part of Alamance County, North Carolina. - Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 30.

The word “Blackfoot” is an identification of native ancestry that has been carried in a small but distinct group of families with roots east of the Mississippi, who could have no logical connection to the Blackfoot nation of the Plains. It appears that this word has been used as a catchall phrase, much as the word “Melungeon” has been used. In other words, it came to be used to describe people of many different heritages who weren’t “quite white.”

What I’ve found in tracing my own family’s origins, however, is a trail leading back to what I believe is a seminal definition of this word. I am in communication at this point with perhaps a dozen individuals with this identification, all of which lead back, along similar migration paths, to the VA/NC Piedmont.

Let me first deal chronologically with what’s known about the village or tribe, the Sissipaha, which must translate as “Blackfoot.” The Sissipaha are associated with the Shakori and Eno branches of the Piedmont Siouan family or confederation of tribes,

---

\* Tutelo words are from: Dictionary of the Tutelo Language, by Horatio Hale.

which were extremely early casualties of English encroachment and simultaneous conflict with the Iroquois.

Perhaps the most influential branch at time of contact was the Occaneechi, whose language was the trade language of the region. They controlled the Roanoke trade routes of the Piedmont. In 1674 they agreed to assist Nathaniel Bacon in his pursuit of a Susquehannock remnant. Bacon turned on the Occaneechi unexpectedly (in a sucker punch, if you will) and destroyed their village on an island in the Roanoke in what is now Clarksville, VA.

There are perhaps 20 tribes or villages of Siouan speaking people of the Piedmont who were constantly merging together for protection through harrowing times. Eno (where, presumably, Sissipaha survivors who would have been associated at that point) are mentioned as one of the groups huddled at Fort Christanna in 1713-1717. There is also mention of the Sissipaha/Shakori/Eno joining the Catawba (also Siouan) in northern South Carolina in roughly this period.

During the Fort Christanna period Governor Spotswood of Virginia, for his convenience, dubbed all the Siouan tribes there as "Saponi." That, and the word Tutelo, dominated the naming of these people in historical references from then on. The historical record runs mainly as such:

Probably about 1740 the Saponi and Tutelo went north, stopping for a time at Shamokin, in Pennsylvania, about the site of Sunbury, where they and other Indians were visited by the missionary David Brainard in 1745. In 1753 the Cayuga formally adopted the Saponi and Tutelo, who thus became a part of the Six Nations, though all had not then removed to New York. In 1765 the Saponi are mentioned as having 30 warriors living at Tioga, about Sayre, PA, and other villages on the northern branches of the Susquehanna. A part remained here until 1778, but in 1771 the principal portion had their village in the territory of the Cayuga, about 2 miles south of what is now Ithaca, NY. After which they disappear from history [the Saponi, that is - the Tutelo survived a bit longer with the Cayuga on Six Nations reserve in Canada where some of their customs and ceremonies are still observed]. – Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 30, page 464.

What has interested me, however, since it appears my own family was among those who "had not then removed to New York" are the other clues to migrations that did not end in total biological extinction.

I believe that a factor which motivated many Piedmont Siouan to resist adoption into the Six Nations was the bitter warfare which had existed between the Iroquois and the Piedmont Siouan for many years, going all the way back to the Mourning Wars of the 17th century. The attrition devouring the Piedmont Siouan from this bitter feuding was a major factor in routing them from their homelands. It would seem natural that some of them would have felt reluctant to capitulate so totally to their hereditary enemies.

Another factor would be the precocious Anglicization of the Piedmont Siouan, which would have adapted them well for life within the frontier economy. During their stay at Fort Christanna (circa 1720) an "Indian School" was instituted in which a number of children were taught by a Mr.Griffin. Unlike the horrendous abuse associated with most

19th and 20th century Indian schools, Mr. Griffin was reported to be a kindly teacher much enjoyed by his pupils. Piedmont Siouan children were also sent to a boarding school at William and Mary College.

There is a documentary associated with archeologists at George Washington Forest (just above Roanoke VA), “The Last of the Tutelo\*,” in which the narrative characterizes the northward bound Tutelo population as relatively worldly and sought-after for diplomatic purposes, for their knowledge of English, and in some cases, their literacy. It was reported in this piece, that Shikellimy, the Six Nations diplomat who coordinated the tributary tribes of Pennsylvania, was married to a Tutelo woman. (I have not yet found the original source material for this and have heard from others that he had a wife from another tribe, but that doesn’t preclude this wife.)

I found this to be particularly intriguing. I’ve been corresponding for the past year and a half with the Mingo-EGADs e-list, devoted to resurrecting Appalachian Iroquois, which was still spoken in some isolated WV communities as late as the 1950’s. (<<http://www.speech.cs.cmu.edu/egads/mingo/>>). I was alerted to subscribe to this e-mail list when posts were circulating called “The Blackfoot of the Seneca.” Some of the list members recalled seeing a roadside marker by this name in Elkins, WV. The Mingo language informant, Dr. Thomas McElwain\* reports, “literally everybody in the town of Mingo at the south end of Randolph country [WV] is a Blackfoot.”

It’s a matter of record that there were Saponi adopted by the Cayuga, some of whom migrated to the Sandusky in Ohio, taking their Saponi adoptees along. This community was referred to as “The Seneca of the Sandusky” though there are reports from visitors to the area that there was ‘nary a Seneca amongst them.’ My understanding is that this was another tributary amalgamation supervised by the Seneca. Putting two and two together, “Blackfoot of the Seneca” would then easily be explained as Saponi people, referring to themselves as Blackfoot, who had just moved from the Sandusky settlement.

Corroborating this is the tidbit linking Shikellimy with a Tutelo wife. One of his sons was Logan, the "Mingo" famous in WV for his "Jeremiah Johnson" like rampage against whites for the murder of his family. There's a monument to him in Mingo County, with a speech he made. His story became legend in the popular press of the day. At any rate, this is another link between Piedmont Siouan people and native refugees to the WV mountains.

The first information I encountered linking the word Blackfoot to the Piedmont Siouan was in Richard and Vicky Haithcock’s book, “Occaneechi Saponi and Tutelo of the Saponi Nation: aka Monacan and Piedmont Catawba.” The Haithcocks are part of the Ohio Saponi community, where the association of the word “Blackfoot” with Saponi has been held traditionally. I’ve presented the word “Sissipaha” as a link to the word “Blackfoot,” simply because it fits so cleanly with the recorded Tutelo words. I may also

---

\* Documentary: Last of the Tutelo, produced and distributed by Hopkins Planetarium in Roanoke, VA.

\* Dr. Thomas McElwain is Professor of Comparative Religions, and a native of

Elkins, WV.

be motivated by a desire to trace the word to a single, tangible source. It's my understanding, however, that The Ohio Saponi feel that the word "Blackfoot" refers to the entire confederation of Piedmont Siouan - that the word "Saponi" itself is a corruption of words for "Blackfoot."

Lawrence Dunmore III, Esq., and former chairperson of the Occaneechi Saponi Band of the Saponi Nation in Hillsborough, NC, has studied the Tutelo language extensively and explained to me that there is confusion surrounding the English corruption of Saponi tribal names. The country farmers of North Carolina used badly mangled, abbreviated corruptions, while across the border, the plantation owners of Virginia used longer, more accurate corruptions, all pointing to the same villages or tribes. Richard Haithcock, in his book, asserts that the words Mansickapanaough, Monasiccapano, Monasukapanough, Saxapawha, Sissipahaw, Siccaponi, Siccasaponi, Sikaponi, Shaponi, Saponi are all corruptions related to this meaning.

Lawrence Dunmore points out some definitions of words that will be useful to keep in mind when researching these tribes. "The term Stuckenock was used by the Virginians to describe the Eno, Shakori and Sissipahau peoples, while individual terms were used for each group by the North Carolinians. All three were one people, recognized by Virginia as Stuckenock and were part of a larger group of people, Yésah" [the Piedmont Siouan]. Also, "the term Adshusheer was the name of an Eno village and the term Keyuawee was a Shakori village. They were not separate tribes."

There is a song recently written for the Pow Wow drum with the words,

Way ah way ah oh,  
Way ah way ah oh,  
Way ah pa way oh  
Ohio, Kentucky, Carolina, Virginia,  
Wataca asutupiah, Monisiccapano.  
Way ah pa way oh  
Tutelo, Saponi, Occaneechi, Monacan,  
We are called the Blackfoot people, Monisiccapano  
Way ah pa way oh.

The song is becoming popular along the Pow Wow circuit in Ohio, North Carolina and Virginia and is spreading the association with the word Blackfoot among descendants.

I'm wondering if there wasn't a segment of the Eastern Siouan who called themselves Blackfoot and that these are the people who migrated into Appalachia and the Midwest (and as far as Texas, there are also some who took a southerly route through Alabama). Perhaps the Saponi and Tutelo who were adopted into the Iroquois League really *were* strictly Saponi or Tutelo, and this Blackfoot identification speaks for another segment of the population who decided to take other paths.

I found an interesting instance of an historic knowledge of a Blackfoot/Saponi link. It was from a man whose family has lived historically on the NC/SC border in Catawba territory. This coincides with the historic record, which reports the Sissipaha/Shakori/Eno fleeing to the Catawba. Some are reported to have left the Catawba after a time, but some remained. So far he's the only person I've encountered

personally here in the South who has this family tradition, and, since his family would link to the “Sissipaha” I’m encouraged with the theory that the Blackfoot were a subgroup of the Piedmont Siouan.

The question of whether the word Blackfoot refers to a segment of the Piedmont Siouan or can speak for the whole Piedmont Siouan population is a subject for further inquiry. Perhaps as more descendants surface, the answers will become more clear. We have a website with a forum devoted to this subject, [www.saponitown.com](http://www.saponitown.com) <<http://www.saponitown.com>>, and welcome any contributions and queries. Reported migration paths of Blackfoot identified people tracing back to the NC/VA Piedmont so far include Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Texas.

The tradition in my own family is that we are “related to a Blackfoot chief.” The line I believe this would derive from was named Harris. Our Thomas Harris appears on the 1810 census in Chambersburg, PA. Chambersburg lies along the Tuscarora Path, which was also used by Piedmont Siouan people migrating north, and is less than 100 miles, on all sides, from Shamokin and Paxtang, PA, and Elkins, WV. My great-grandfather reported that the family derived originally from Virginia.

Interestingly, there is a Chief Harris reported by John Buck, one of the last Tutelos at Six Nations, who was interviewed by anthropologist J. Owen Dorsey at Six Nations Reserve in 1882. John Buck said that this Chief Harris led a loyalist faction of Southern Saponi north to New York to join Joseph Brandt and the Loyalist Iroquois at the start of the Revolutionary War. There is a document to this effect in the National Anthropological Archives in Washington, D.C. I have also found mention of a Cheraw chief by the name of Harris. Richard Haithcock lists a number of HARRISES in New York, Cayuga adoptees in the 1820’s. Not only was Harris a common name, the name Thomas Harris occurred frequently.

I live now in North Carolina, though I was raised in Chicago. My family has lived in Illinois or Wisconsin since the 1870’s. My husband and I met in Los Angeles 13 years ago. The subject of Indian ancestry never came up, other than to mention we both had some we knew nothing about. As it turns out, his family derives on one side a few miles from the old Occaneechi Island, from the other, on land within the boundaries of the Fort Christanna reservation in a community that has all the earmarks of a tri-racial isolate. By the theory of “who’s buried in Grant’s Tomb?” he is mostly likely one-third Saponi himself.

## Bibliography

- Hodge, Frederick Webb. Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico. Washington: Government Printing Offices, 2 vols., 1907-10.
- Mooney, Siouan Tribes of the East. Bull. Bureau of American Ethnology, 1894
- Right, Douglas L. The American Indian in North Carolina, Durham, NC, Duke University press, 1947.
- Swanton, John R., The Indian Tribes of North America, Washington, Smithsonian Institution press, 1952.
- Swanton, John R., The Indians of the Southeastern United States, Washington, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1946.

#### About The Author:

Linda Keres Carter lives in Snow Hill, North Carolina with her husband, Barry Carter, and her four young children. She produced a video dramatization for the educational market, *Sister Becky's Baby*, a North Carolina folk tale, and does web design to support her own and her husband's business ventures. The family is active with Eastern Bull Drum and Singers and attends many pow wows.

## **BARBADOS AND THE MELUNGEONS OF APPALACHIA**

By: L.E. SALAZAR

For the past 375 years Barbados has been anglophone. Due to its position as the most easterly island in the Caribbean, it was early recognized to be of strategic naval and military importance. And with the popularity of sugar which was introduced to the island by the Dutch from Brazil, the tiny island loomed large as Britain's most prosperous colony. The spread of sugar plantations precipitated migration to the other colonies as those bondsmen who were to be paid in land at the end of their service were unable to secure the ten acres that was their due. May Lumsden states that from 1650 to 1680 nearly 30,000 of the 80,000 original settlers of Barbados moved on to the North American mainland or to other islands. And credits this outflow to the North American colonies with the introduction of "ideas, capital, agricultural know-how, a gracious life-style, as well as a determination to work and prosper."<sup>[1]</sup> Today, many of the descendants of early settlers of America can trace their ancestry to Barbados so that as a foremost colony with unbroken records of its English speaking inhabitants since 1637, Barbados' history cannot be discounted in any study of the English speaking Americas and its peoples.

Familiarity with those records of Barbados settlers indicates that there were small endogamous groups of non-English peoples who Anglicized their names. In comparing the oral history of my own family with that of the written records, I came to the conclusion that they had originally been Flemish and by 1715 had done what others were doing, and that was to bring their names in line with English domination of the island. This practice of accommodation by adjustment of surnames in Barbados is the precedent for the mystery to which Brent Kennedy points concerning Melungeon surnames and the Melungeon claim to be other than English.

In Brent Kennedy's history of the Melungeons, there is a marked pattern, a parallel, to be found in Barbados. It is not associated so much with the love child who

---

<sup>[1]</sup> May Lumsden, The Barbados-American Connection, (Canada: The Layne Company, 1982) 9-10

was incorporated into the plantocracy both in North and South America and in Barbados but with the ones who were referred to as "abandoned people", a name which aptly describes what Kennedy translates from Turkish as being "melun-can" - a lost soul. Together, "lost soul" and "abandoned people" convey the sense of dispossession and of alienation from mainstream society in a period of history when in this hemisphere persons were forcibly removed from their homelands and left to fend for themselves in unaccustomed environments.<sup>2[2]</sup>

On the other hand, Melungeon may be, as Kennedy also offers; simply the Portuguese word for mixed race and this would tie into their claims to be Portuguese. This then leads us to yet another group of unsettled people, in search of land, a new identity and acceptance and these would be persons connected with Jewish communities who had become conversos. Jewish emigres from Brazil migrated to Barbados in 1654. According to Shilstone by the end of the seventeenth century there were about 250 living on the island and "although mainly Portuguese, were gathered from all parts of the world". There was also reference to Jews in Barbados since 1628. This figure of 250 most likely can only apply to practicing Jews.<sup>3[3]</sup> Under the Inquisition Jews had been persecuted for their religious beliefs so that fleeing from Mexico and Brazil, some of their households would have accepted Christianity as a protection and, in so doing, would have stressed their kinship with the Christian nations rather than with Judaism. Cromwell offered asylum to the Jews of Europe to settle in Barbados and a synagogue has been in existence in Barbados since 1664. Mixed race persons from Jewish households might therefore have found it preferable when removed to another colony to identify with the culture from which they had sprung. For instance, in 1729 Jacob Valverde made a bequest to his daughter of the "Indian Wench Sary" and to his son, "the negro Woman called Esparansa." Esparansa was no doubt an Anglicization of the Spanish 'Esperanza'.<sup>4[4]</sup> When such mixed persons escaped to a better life it would have been more politic to stress their Spanish heritage to account for their darker skin.

Since Barbados was at the center of English colonialism, in this article, therefore, I would wish to give a brief outline of Barbados history and draw the parallels between the Melungeons and the poor whites and poor coloreds of Barbados - the red people, because they are brothers in poverty and the love child is their sister.

### **Displacement and the Melting Pot:**

In the midst of later conflicting evidence as to the number of persons settled by Sir William Courteen on the island of Barbados, the Sloan Manuscript 2441, recorded in the Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, sets out an Account of His Majesty's Island of Barbados and the Government Prepared about 1684 which describes the first ship load of settlers from England thus:

"In 1626 Courteen settled 1850 men, women and children - English, Indians and others."<sup>5[5]</sup>

---

<sup>2[2]</sup> N.Brent Kennedy, *The Melungeons*, (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997) 10

<sup>3[3]</sup> E.M. Shilstone, "The Jewish Synagogue", *Chapters in Barbados History*, ed. P.F. Campbell (Barbados: BMHS, 1986) 145

<sup>4[4]</sup> Barbados Archives, *Wills*, RB6 VOL 16/416

<sup>5[5]</sup> *JBMHS*, vol III, p. 44

It is to those "Indians and Others" that historians and genealogists must now turn our attention as it demonstrates the genesis of the relegation of certain peoples to a non-existent status. Even though there is some evidence of a lively slave trade between North America and Barbados in Native Americans taken from the American accounts unearthed by Jack Forbes and Barbara Olexer, it has been the official position in Barbados that only a few Native Americans, mostly from South America, were enslaved here. Yet, as pointed out in Love Child, there are references to slaves whose names are re-echoed in North America.<sup>6[6]</sup> Chief among these is Cumba/Coombah which Kennedy attributes to the Lumbee/Croatan of North and South Carolina.<sup>7[7]</sup>

In Barbados, the term "abandoned people" was used to describe an endogamous group of poor, white-skinned people who were also called "poor backras or buckras", a name not far removed from the epithet "buck" used to describe male North American Natives and Natives of Guyana in South America. This reference to abandonment was used by the upper classes, the high whites and the high browns, and even though this community which has sister communities in the Grenadines and St. Vincent appeared to be Caucasians they were yet called, by visibly African people: "red". This is the same term used to describe Native Americans, as opposed to the Europeans who were always referred to as "white".

Added to this mosaic were the victims of the African slave trade moving from Africa to Barbados and on to the American colonies together with the other hidden trade in Native American slaves moving from the colonies to Barbados and other islands which is yet to be fully documented. But it is crucial to understanding the history of those light-skinned persons who, having been born outside the pale, whether separate or of combined Native American, European and African origin, saw a chance to remove themselves from the taint of slavery by transferring to the North American colonies. Those among them who had the means being assimilated into frontier society and those without, being cast out.

Since the belief was cemented that there were few Indians enslaved in Barbados, Price took the trodden path that the name Red Legs and Red Shanks which applied in South Carolina to persons of Indian descent could not have the same meaning in Barbados, but applied as he was told to kilted highlanders.<sup>8[8]</sup> No one took the time to analyze the names in the slave inventories. For instance, in 1650 Colonel William Hilliard of Somerset leased Henley Plantation on the East Coast for 99 years to six gentlemen "... with all negroes Indians and other slaves with all cattel household stuff..." Six years later he deeded the plantation to his son in law "in consideration of marriage between Meliora daughter of the said William Hillyard" and one of the above lessees together "with all negroes Indians and others."<sup>9[9]</sup>

Although the documents speak to Indians in the plural only one woman is singled out as being such. In the first deed, her name is given as Simmy and in the other as Syminige which name is phonetically the same as the Yoruba Sheminige. All other slaves are called "negro" and the Mareahs of the first document are spelt in the second in their Spanish form which is Maria. This tiny clue bears witness to a later statement by a

---

<sup>6[6]</sup> L.E. Salazar, Love Child, (Barbados: Family Find, 2000) 45-46

<sup>7[7]</sup> N. Brent Kennedy, The Melungeons, (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997) 173

<sup>8[8]</sup> Edward T. Price, "The Redlegs of Barbados", JBMHS, vol 29, p. 47

<sup>9[9]</sup> Barbados Department of Archives, RB3 vol 5/125

Governor of Spanish Florida that the English were kidnapping Mestizos - half-breeds. The Hilliard inventory therefore marks a sinister trend and that is that Native American ancestry was being officially erased or subsumed under the European or African partner's category.

A footnote to the Hilliard Deeds is the appearance of a paradox. Hilliard records that 23 new slaves who are obviously second generation since they have Christian names were brought to Barbados on the May Flower commandeered by Captain Hunte. It would be ironical if this is the same good ship the Mayflower which brought passengers to religious freedom in North America and alternatively brought others to be shackled in Barbados.

As for Moors in the Caribbean, Pere Labat left that record of them in the French islands. In the English colonies, the West African peoples of Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal were the ones who were highly favored and the ones most likely to be chosen as overseers. And, more importantly, to be given Native American wives before the influx of African women made it unnecessary. The first baptismal records of Barbados also indicate that several people were baptized without reference to their parents and, especially, without reference to their mothers, which leads to the very simple conclusion that these mothers were in fact non-Europeans. Stemming from Barbados, therefore, one could find a multi-racial group of people of varying hues who could claim an ancestor who was Portuguese, Dutch, English, Scotch-Irish, West African or Native American but who were themselves anglophone.

### **Parallel Surnames**

Of the Barbados Census of 1680, David Kent remarks that among those of the Hebrew nation are people with Portuguese surnames but Lumsden further elucidates that many of the emigrants from Brazil had earlier had their abode in Amsterdam. This combination of Dutch and Portuguese speaking Jews may comprise a small part of the claim of some Melungeons to be of Dutch or Portuguese descent since the Jewish people were particularly versatile in adapting their surnames to suit their temporary abode, for example, Navarrh could have been derived from Navarrhoe, an early Barbados Jewish name. The names Gibson and Davis which feature in Kennedy's lists as being Redbones are re-echoed in Price's reference to transplanted Barbadian Red-Legs to St. Vincent and Bequia, neighboring islands.

The history of Flemish ingenuity and their resistance to Spanish oppression by settlement in the Netherlands and in Britain is a key to understanding social relationships and inter-marriage patterns in Barbados and elsewhere because it shows that people who have been separated by nations often seek out their ethnic groups when they come into unfamiliar surroundings. By this period, the Flemish people had either become British like Sir William Courteen or were known as Dutch like Governor Groenewegen to whom Courteen's men resorted for assistance in setting up the colony.

In 1651, however, Sir George Ayscue with his fleet banished the Dutch from Barbados. So where did they go when thrust out of Barbados? The American frontier is the most likely place. The appearance of people on the mainland who have no previous record among the so-called white inhabitants of Barbados may be explained by the possibility that some persons had slipped abroad without licenses to travel to another

colony. By 1663, Barbadians were showing interest in colonizing Carolina and many of the Melungeon names are to be found in Barbados.

Kennedy astutely pointed to the presence of Turkish artisans among the English and the possibility of gypsies being among early colonists, a hypothesis which is ably confirmed for the latter group by The Calendar of State Papers of 1679 which records the following proposal to the King and Council:

"to constitute an office for transporting to the plantations all vagrants, rogues, and idle persons that can give no account of themselves, felons who have the benefit of clergy, such as are convicted for petty larceny, vagabonds, gypsies, and low persons, making resort to unlicensed brothels, such persons to be transported from the nearest seaport, and to serve four years according to the laws and customs of those islands, if over twenty years of age."<sup>10[10]</sup>

### **Slavery and Prejudice**

The sense of superiority which naturally arises when one group takes control of another's destiny is no new phenomenon. It runs through the history of mankind and this is why this writer considers the Melungeon movement to be so important at this juncture in history as a force resistant to racist rhetoric so that persons who acknowledge the contribution of their multi-ethnic ancestors reflected in their own lives powerfully disprove charges of intellectual inferiority which the bigoted would like to see as inherent in any one people.

On one hand, the South Carolina courts<sup>11[11]</sup> were in essence saying that a mixed race person with property and known association with whites could be deemed white with all the attendant privileges of that status. But on the other hand, a slave, no matter how far he was removed from his African ancestry, could have no such aspirations. In Barbados, the principle was the same, though strongly denied. The closeness that obtained between Barbados and the Carolinas and Virginia in particular, with so many persons of the pioneer companies having proceeded from Barbados, makes this phenomenon very understandable as the genesis for the need for isolation and the imparting of extreme prejudice to subsequent generations. In Barbados, gave birth to a visibly white community yet known as Red, their original status.

### **Other Parallels**

The Calendar of State Papers for 1657 gives the unique description of the labor policies on Barbados in which the Irish "were derided by the negroes as white slaves" and records that negroes were being employed at trades rather than the English, Scotch and Irish. Two years before the official report it was recorded that the import of Irish people as labor was being resisted by the English because the Irish were wont to throw in their lot with the escaped slaves. Yet the written record on Barbados is that the Irish never intermarried with the escapees they joined forces with.

#### 1) Isolation

---

<sup>10[10]</sup> Calendar of State Papers, 221

<sup>11[11]</sup> Jack Forbes, Africans and Native Americans, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993)253

Forbes came to the conclusion that many of the removed Native Americans were engaged in fishing activities. Early Barbados history confirms that the captured natives were being used as fishermen as well as house servants and coincidentally, pockets of white communities with a non-European culture were springing up being termed Red-Legs or Poor Backras marrying among themselves. Early photographs of Red-Legs show a marked resemblance to some of Kennedy's portraits of Native American and Melungeon families.

On Barbados, the Red-Leg community centered on the hilly, isolated areas of Irish Town and the Scotland District which has led historians to believe that they were an unmixed remnant of Scotch-Irish. The eating habits formerly ascribed to them of eating lice, crickets and bonavist, a type of bean, however indicates more than Irish origins. Impoverished through lack of opportunity these communities were referred to as "abandoned people".

## 2) Degradation:

The accounts of the Red-Leg during slavery is that of collaboration with slaves to steal their masters' goods and of care extended to them by slaves who were better clothed and fed. These accounts are at variance with that of an editorial written in the Barbadian newspaper of 1861 which stated that "they became the armed protectors of the proprietary against the insurrection of the slaves." It is the same job description for Amerindians in Guyana and Indian trackers elsewhere. In that editorial, emphasis was loaded on their being descended from "gentlemen, clergy, officers of the army and navy, industrious families of the middle classes in England, sturdy English labourers..."<sup>12[12]</sup> Though true to one extent, no reference was made to the mixed ancestry of the mates of these English persons.

Early accounts of their lifestyle of squalor, loose living and thievery were not explained except by the word "abandoned". Their poverty was accepted and even their education was limited by the plantocracy as being suitable for an underclass. Some Red Legs of Barbados, as the Melungeons of Appalachia, eventually removed themselves from European aggression and African infiltration but this is only half the story. The other half I attempted to cover in the story of the love child, the ones who were assimilated into European communities as they settled in England, the Commonwealth and North America.

In conclusion, the rediscovery of the history of the Melungeons, as related by Brent Kennedy, is of one people linked by our Native American ancestry throughout the Caribbean and the Americas. To be melungeon in today's world is to have the courage to acknowledge the mosaic of our ancestral heritage and to revel in the various aspects of those cultures which have formed us; but it goes further than that. I believe that it must rank as the start of a movement to uncover the truth of human history without racial bias. Because it is clear that if, within 400 years, the record of some peoples' existence can be so mangled that only a glossy official record remains, then what has been accepted as truth concerning ancient empires must be challenged so that there are no missing gaps; and that, I think, must be our mission.

## About The Author

---

<sup>12[12]</sup> JBMHS, vol 27, 116

L.E. Salazar is a multi-racial person. She graduated from the University of the West Indies, having fulfilled the requirements for a B.A. (Hons.) degree in History. She researches genealogies and has a special interest in ethnicity. She is the author of *Love Child: A Guide to the Social History of Barbados*.

Website: [http://www.geocities.com/family\\_find](http://www.geocities.com/family_find)

**NOTE:**

This next article is not specifically about American Indians. But I thought you might be interested in learning about another fascinating group of people that mixed with the American Indian Melungeons. The Melungeon DNA released in July of 2002 clearly showed an American Indian component in Melungeon ancestry. It also showed another interesting component, that of the Roma Gypsy.

## **A Possible End to the Mystery of Melungeons**

By: HENRY ROBERT BURKE

I am rather proud of the fact that after all the different ideas that have been expressed about Melungeons in recent years, there has been surprisingly little hostility shown

between researchers. I think this is a very encouraging sign and I hope the good will continue, because I can see the possibility of some answers. It is my feeling that the Riddle of the Melungeons will finally be understood. In the end, I believe that all of us researchers will have been a little bit right and all of us researchers will have been a little bit wrong, but that all of us will have enjoyed and profited from each others research.

To me Melungeons are a tremendously interesting subject. No matter what the final conclusion turns out to be, Melungeons are exclusively American. The term Melungeon would hardly fit in any language except (American) English. Melungeon Culture would hardly be appropriate anywhere except Appalachia. Melungeons hardly matter to anyone except Melungeons and perhaps a few sociologists. Could it be possible that Melungeon and American mean the same thing?

What does the word Melungeon mean? The dictionary or encyclopedia does not even carry a definition for the word. The word Melungeon means different things to different people. To some it may mean a culture or sub-culture, to some it may mean an ethnic group and to some it may mean a lifestyle. There are names like Black Dutch, Black Irish and dozens of other terms which may be connected to the word Melungeon. The word has connotations with Native American, African American and with people from the Middle East. Perhaps when incorporated, all of the above apply to Melungeons.

We have all researched, we have all postulated, we have all developed theories, but to date, no one seems to have been able to prove anything conclusive, except that Melungeons appear to have originated in Appalachia and we all knew that when we started.

The good news is, that we now have DNA analysis to sort out the genealogy of any given human being or group of human beings. DNA is the abbreviation for **deoxyribonucleic acid** organic chemical a complex molecular structure that is found in all prokaryotic and eukaryotic cells and in many viruses. **DNA** codes genetic information for the transmission of inherited traits.

Genetic studies have been used to help decipher the origins of human populations and the history of their movements across the world. In the 1960's, genetic studies focused on differences in proteins and blood groups to reconstruct relationships among human populations.

With the advent of the new genetic technology based on the study of recombinant DNA the focus has shifted to the abundant variation found in the hereditary material of DNA. The small, circular DNA found in the mitochondria (mtDNA) of the cytoplasm of our cells has been particularly useful for tracing maternal lineages of contemporary populations to their ancestral roots. These kinds of studies have begun to produce a preliminary picture of how contemporary populations are related to each other.

(For example), a pattern has emerged indicating a considerable degree of genetic differentiation among Siberian populations, especially among those populations living in the extreme North. These differences may be due in part to random fluctuations (genetic drift) caused by low population densities and small tribal numbers in this region. On the other hand, genetic data have demonstrated a close resemblance between the aboriginal Siberian tribes living east of the Yenisey River and northern Mongoloid populations, and similarities among populations dwelling to the west of the Yenisey River and to some European populations. **This same technology can be used to solve the riddle of the origins of Melungeons!**

But do we really want to solve the mystery of the origins of Melungeons? I even wonder about my own motives. I know I will miss researching about the mysterious Melungeons. This has been a great adventure for me. I have met some wonderful people and enjoyed some lively discussions concerning the subject. When there is no longer any mystery, I wonder what I will have to concentrate on. This situation reminds me of a line from a movie named KING KONG. Kong was a fictional giant Ape who had for many years, terrorized an isolated primitive population of humans on a small remote island. Kong was both feared and revered by the island's natives, yet ironically he also gave the incentive. Then the island was discovered by modern men. They captured and removed King Kong to America. Someone commented that the natives were lucky to be rid of that monster. A wiser voice spoke up and stated very eloquently, that the natives had lost their god, i.e., their best friend. After Kong was gone, they had anything to motivate them. Without Kong, life on the island was so easy that social decay ensued and most of the natives became drunks.

Well, I am so confident that DNA will at least give us some very good answers, that I am already looking for some interesting new project of research. I have enjoyed researching the Melungeons. It has occupied a fair amount of my time and has in fact taken a fair amount of my energy. I am seriously going to miss the hours of pondering over possible explanations. My only consolation is that be I will not be alone in misery!

**My Case for Gypsy or Roma Origins of the Melungeon Appalachian Sub-Culture** - is based in part on the history of how Gypsies were treated in Eastern Europe, Western Europe and later in the Americas.

The Roma, or "Gypsies," entered south-eastern Europe in the last quarter of the 13th Century, caught up in the Ottoman expansion westwards. Originating in India as a composite, non-Aryan military population assembled to resist the Muslim incursions led by the Ghaznavids, they left through the Hindu Kush during the first quarter of the 11th Century, moving through Persia, Armenia and the Byzantine Empire towards the West. (*Hancock, 1995:17-28*).

The condition of slavery in Eastern Europe emerged later, out of the increasingly stringent measures taken by the landowners, the court and the monasteries to prevent their Romani labor force from leaving the principalities, as they were beginning to do in response to the ever more burdensome demands upon their skills, and from the shift of their "limited fiscal dependency upon the Romanian princes" to an "unlimited personal dependency on the big landlords of the country, the monasteries and the boyars" (*Gheorghe, 1983:23*).

The Code of Basil the Wolf of Moldavia, dated 1654, contained references to the treatment of slaves, including the death penalty in the case of the rape of a white woman by a Rom. (*The same offense committed by a non-Rom warranted no punishment, according to the same Code*). Gheorghe (*loc. cit.*) saw the process of the enslavement of Roma as an abuse committed by the feudal landlords, without any legal base or legitimation; certainly their outsider status denied Roma any power to resist, and qualified them for this status according to the Islamic world-view of the occupying Ottomans, for whom dominated non-Muslim populations were "fit only for enslavement" (*Sugar, 1964:103*). By the 1500s, the terms *rob* and *tsigan* had become synonymous with "slave," although the latter was originally a neutral ethnonym applied by the Europeans to the first Roma. The fact that in 1995 *tsigan* was adopted by the Romanian government as

the official designation for Roma in that country has generated much pain and anger, and is indicative of the ongoing racism against the Romani minority in contemporary Romania. (See Szente, 1996, and Zenk, 1991).

Slave Sale Advertisement:

"For sale, a prime lot of Gypsy slaves, to be sold by auction at the Monastery of St. Elias, 8 May 1852, consisting of 18 men, 10 boys, 7 women and 3 girls: in fine condition."

Wallachia. (From Ian Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome*, 1987.)

House slaves were forbidden to speak Romani, and their descendants, the Beyash (also *Boyash* or *Bayash*), today have a variety of Romanian, a Latin-based language, rather than Romani, as their mother tongue. Female house slaves were also provided to visitors for sexual entertainment (*Colson, 1839*); the half-white children of such unions automatically became slaves. In the 16th Century, a Romani child sold for the equivalent of 48¢. By the 19th Century, slaves were sold by weight, at the rate of one gold piece per pound. Treatment of the slaves included flogging, the falague or shredding the soles of the feet with a whip, cutting off of the lips, burning with lye, and wearing a three-cornered spiked iron collar called a cangue. Slaves were able to escape periodically and take refuge in maroon communities in the Carpathian mountains; these are called *netoti* in the literature.

By 1800 the laws codified by Basil the Wolf in 1654 had been forgotten, and the treatment of the slaves had become a matter of the whim of those in charge of the estates or the monasteries. The Ottoman court attempted to make the laws more stringent, and in 1818 incorporated into the Wallachian Penal code the following laws: §2 "Gypsies are born slaves," §3 "Anyone born of a mother who is a slave, is also a slave," §5 "Any owner has the right to sell or give away his slaves," and §6 "Any Gypsy without an owner is the property of the Prince." But Ottoman rule was thwarted by a takeover by the Russians in 1826, and Paul Kisseleff was appointed governor in 1829. He was firmly opposed to slavery, but because of pressure from the boyars, among other things, he did not abolish it. Instead in 1833 he incorporated stringent, conservative revisions in the Moldavian civil code, including the following: §II(154) "Legal unions cannot take place between free persons and slaves," §II(162) "Marriage between slaves cannot take place without their owner's consent," §II(174) "The price of a slave must be fixed by the Tribunal, according to his age, condition and profession," and §II(176) "If anyone has taken a female slave as a concubine, she will become free after his death. If he has had any children by her, they will also become free."

While the enslavement of Roma in the Balkans is the most extensively documented, Gypsies have also been enslaved at different times in other parts of the world. In Renaissance England King Edward VI passed a law stating that Gypsies be "branded with a V on their breast, and then enslaved for two years," and if they escaped and were recaptured, they were then branded with an S and made slaves for life. During the same period in Spain, according to a decree issued in 1538, Gypsies were enslaved for perpetuity to individuals as a punishment for escaping. Spain had already begun shipping Gypsies to the Americas in the 15th century; three were transported by Columbus to the Caribbean on his third voyage in 1498.

Spain's later *Solucion Americans* involved the shipping of Gypsy slaves to its colony in 18th century Louisiana. An Afro-Gypsy community today lives in St. Martin's Parish, and reportedly there is another one in central Cuba, both descended from intermarriage

between the two enslaved peoples. In the 16th century, Portugal shipped Gypsies as an unwilling labor force to its colonies in Maranhão (*now Brazil*), Angola and even India, the Romas' country of origin which they had left five centuries earlier. They were made Slaves of the Crown in 18th century Russia during the reign of Catherine the Great, while in Scotland during the same period they were employed "in a state of slavery" in the coal mines.

**England and Scotland shipped Roma to Virginia and the Caribbean as slaves during the 17th and 18th centuries; John Morton, in his *West India Customs and Manners (1793)*, describes seeing "many Gypsies (*in Jamaica*) subject from the age of eleven to thirty to the prostitution and lust of overseers, book-keepers, Negroes, &c. (*and*) taken into keeping by gentlemen who paid exorbitant hire for their use."**

A large measure of my thesis rests with the fact that a substantial number of Gypsies were brought to North America. In general, the Gypsies became dispersed through out the American population as Black Dutch, Black Irish, Melungeons and various other descriptive names. Some mixed with Native Americans, some mixed with African Americans and many mixes with European Americans. Some of the Gypsies who migrated to Appalachia as groups, formed the basis for the Melungeon Culture. With this I rest my case, for now I am confident that there is sufficient incentive to warrant the DNA Study that I have been suggesting for a few years.

## AFTERWORD

To my thinking the man that started the current Melungeon "Revival" was a man named Brent Kennedy. I cannot count the number of people that have told me they became interested in Melungeons after reading his book: "The Melungeons: The Resurrection of a Proud People" So I think it only fitting to let this modern day Melungeon pioneer have the last word in this book. And I would like to publicly thank him for the great efforts he has put into the Melungeon Movement.

K.D.

**A NEW PATH**  
**A Statement from Brent Kennedy**  
**June 24, 2002**

The long-awaited DNA results are in and as many of us have maintained, the Melungeons are indeed a mixture of all races and many ethnic groups. The DNA samples in this study represent the oldest, most established Melungeon male and female lines in the Hancock County community, and the Wise County community. Extensive genealogies for these two populations – and those sampled - are known and documented. Respected members of each community assisted in the collection of the samples, and these samples can be examined separately (by community) and compared against one another.

In addition to Native American (approximately 5% of the sample), African (approximately 5%) and European (approximately 83% of the sample, but representing Europeans from north to south), the study also showed approximately 7% of the samples matching populations in Turkey, Syria and northern India. In other words, the surviving genes from Middle Eastern and East Indian ancestors are in equal proportion to those of Native Americans and Africans. My gut feeling is that the original, seventeenth-century percentages of all three groups (i.e., African, Native American, and Middle Eastern/East Indian) were higher than what we're seeing today. Time, admixture, and out-movement of some of our darker cousins into other minority groups have likely lowered the genetic traces of their earlier presence. But enough of them were there to still be traceable among the Melungeons of today. The long discounted Mediterranean and Middle Eastern heritages are irrefutably there.

Very importantly, this study is only a sampling. It's impossible to get to every single bona fide Melungeon descendant. Consequently, all this – or any other – DNA study can do is CONFIRM heritages – it cannot dismiss them. But via the genetic sequences found, it can give us a hint at the ethnic make-up of the earliest Melungeons. In this regard, I am still keeping an open mind regarding the theories that are out there. Four hundred years has allowed a great deal of time for population admixture and each family has its own distinct cultural and ethnic legacy. The original people referred to as Melungeons may have been Africans, or East Indians, or Native Americans, or Turks, or Gypsies or Portuguese or whatever. Not one of us knows with absolute certainty. What we do know is that very early on these various populations combined into one people known as Melungeons.

As those who attended Fourth Union heard, from both Dr. Jones and Dr. Morris, this finding is incredibly important from a healthcare standpoint alone. Native Americans, Europeans, and African Americans can – and do – carry Middle Eastern and Mediterranean diseases. It takes very few individuals in a founding population to have a dramatic impact on a gene pool. African Americans and Native Americans can – and do – have Familial Mediterranean Fever. White Americans can – and do – have Sickle Cell Anemia. Having the genetic and genealogical data to explain why is critical to improving healthcare.

The study also underscores another important aspect of the origins debate: nearly all theories are correct to some extent. The only ones wrong are those that have been exclusive in their premise. The long-standing academic position that Melungeons are a “tri-racial isolate” consisting of *strictly* northern Europeans, *strictly West* Africans, and Native Americans is incorrect. Those unwilling to add any other ethnic group to the mix have been wrong. **This is what I stated in my book and have maintained for years: *we are mixed and highly inclusive, and that inclusiveness includes Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and East Indian.***

We should also keep in mind that these non Native-American ethnic groups could have arrived in a myriad of ways, and likely did. Those who have read my book or heard me speak know that this has always been my position. **I have never been wed to any theory of arrival – what I have been wed to is, simply, arrival.** Santa Elena and its outlying forts continue to help explain how some of these people - and their genes - might have gotten here. There were Gypsies and Conversos (e.g., Jews, Arabs, Berbers, East Indians, Turks, Moors, Africans, etc.) at Santa Elena who, even as "good Catholic Spaniards and “good Catholic Portuguese" would have carried their ancestral genes from their ancestral homelands. The finding of Turkish genes (both male and female lines) in the Melungeon population seems to indicate full families, so Santa Elena remains an origin possibility for some of the Melungeon ancestors. There were no women with Drake's Turks and the Turks themselves weren't sending families here, at least as far as I know. The British, however, were doing so. Turkish and Armenian families were documentably present in Jamestown, serving the English colonists as indentured servants and artisans. Whatever the case, historians are best equipped to determine HOW the genes arrived. Finally, East Indians were brought to these shores in significant numbers from the early 1600s on and Romany (Gypsies) are also well documented in Virginia and the Carolinas during the same time period. There was, simply said, no shortage of the people necessary to provide the genetic proof to back up the Melungeon claims of origin.

I don't yet know my full family DNA results but when I do I, and hopefully others, will share the information in an effort to help solve the roles specific families have played in the Melungeon odyssey. But I do know one sequence and this single piece of information is enlightening. My Mitochondrial DNA, which I inherited from my Mother, matches the Siddis of India. The dark-skinned Siddis likely originated from what today is Ethiopia, Eritrea, or Somalia – sub-Saharan, east Africa. They were transported to India in a variety of ways, most not so pleasant, and formed a major component of what became known as the Untouchable Caste. Their lives- and the life of my ancestral Mother – must have been horribly difficult. But she survived long enough to have at least one

daughter and that daughter did likewise. And generation after generation this original Ethiopian girl's DNA was passed along until, in 1950, it came to me.

How my particular East Indian ancestor made her way to America remains unclear. It may have been as the wife of a sixteenth-century New World Portuguese settler (the sixteenth-century Portuguese soldiers married northern Indian women by the thousands). Or she may have been the spouse of a seventeenth-century British ex-patriot, or an East Indian female sent to the Caribbean as an indentured servant. Still again, she may have arrived on these shores as a Rom (or so-called, Gypsy) girl. Many Romany share the Siddi mitochondria and the Romany-related surnames that follow this particular mitochondrial line in my family (Mullins, Bennett, Rose, etc.) would seem supportive of a Romany origin. Regardless of her mode of arrival to the New World, what is clear is that she – and her genes -did indeed make their way here. My Mother and I are living proof of this woman's legacy. All this to say that had a young, sub-Saharan east African girl never lived, never been transported to India, and never had a daughter of her own, I wouldn't be here.

So, what is the meaning of all this? For me, I can sum it up this way:

While I am likely – and proudly – of northern European heritage, I am also of Siddi heritage. And I am equally kin to the Scotsman tilling his field outside Glasgow, the Chickahominy Indian fighting to keep tribal pride alive, and the various east Africans at one another's throats in Somalia. The Israelis and Palestinians dealing out death on a daily basis, the Appalachian blue grass banjo picker, the Indian and Pakistani soldiers staring one another down in Kashmir, and – yes – the down-beaten Untouchable in the poorest ghettos of southern India are also family. All are literally, not just figuratively, MY people. Genocide in the Balkans, earthquakes in Turkey, riots in Argentina, and repressive regimes in Afghanistan are no longer faraway occurrences of little consequence. In every tragedy on this Earth, a relative is suffering. And this leads me to a deeper understanding of just what the Melungeon story really means, and the transition that I must make.

**We in Appalachia are known for our powerful storytelling tradition.** Beginning today we have the opportunity to tell the most important story in our history – the story of the Oneness of Mankind and how this Oneness is exemplified in the Appalachian heartland. The irony that we in Appalachia and those whose roots lie in these mountains – long considered the lowest of the low – could play a role in World ethnic harmony is staggering in its implications. But it's not a pipe dream. We can send a powerful message to all people everywhere, that:

**No place, no region, no human being is too small, too remote, or too insignificant to justify dismissal. We are all of the same flesh and each of us matters.**

From this point on, our mission lies in spreading this message beyond these mountains. And we need to start at the earliest levels of teaching – our elementary schools – well before the seeds of racism and hate have been sown.

**Beginning this week, I commit myself to this mission.** The time has come for me to leave the historical and origins research, further DNA analysis, and other academic pursuits to those more qualified. My task was to be a catalyst – an instigator. Fourteen years ago, very few people cared about the Melungeons or any other mixed race population for that matter. That deeply bothered me, as I felt that these various populations deserved more attention from academia and, indeed, had played a far larger role in building this nation than they'd ever been given credit for. Placing them all into a box labeled “tri-racial isolate” and closing the lid seemed a grave injustice. I wrote my book to force the acknowledgement of our multi-racial communities and, in a sense, to help bring them out of the closet in which academia had shoved them. I believe I've contributed to an increased awareness and, hopefully, an increased pride. The level of interest and the sheer volume of books and articles being written today is enormous compared to the late 1980s and early 1990s. This was my dream and I am now confident that this interest will not dissipate.

There are a myriad of talented researchers exploring a variety of Melungeon related issues. Dozens of younger scholars are joining the older established writers and researchers in the search for Melungeon origins and the meaning of that search. Over the past decade, people like Jack Goins, Manuel Mira, Eloy Gallegos, James Nickens, Pat Elder, Mike Nassau, Wayne Winkler, Tim Hashaw, Carroll and Betty Goyne, and Virginia DeMarce have added substantial knowledge to what we might soon begin calling “Melungeon Studies.” Each of these individuals deserves our gratitude and our praise. My long-standing hope has been, and continues to be, that all those researching this important topic can somehow pull together. That we acknowledge our differing opinions on historical matters, but that we come to recognize our shared commitment to (1) caring for these people and their culture, and (2) abhorring racism in any form. These shared commitments far outweigh the debate over who showed up first, where the name came from, or what color John Doe might have been. Perhaps my greatest disappointment over the years has rested in the inability or unwillingness of what should have been fellow travelers on a very bumpy road to travel together. It's not too late.

**In closing, I've done all that I can do for those who came before us.** From this point on, I plan on devoting my efforts to making this Earth a better place for the living. If I've learned anything in this nearly fifteen-year journey, it's the sobering reality that human prejudice exists everywhere – even *within* the very groups that have been the target of such prejudice. The heated debates over who can – or cannot be – a Melungeon are reminiscent of the earlier debates over who can – or cannot be – white. I know we don't intend it to be this way, but this is what invariably happens when we humans insist on categorizing and refining human ethnicity. It's this same mindset that, when carried to an extreme, results in prejudice, ethnic cleansing and, ultimately, genocide. “Race” is cultural, not genetic. I've been accused time and again of “diluting” Melungeon ethnicity to the point of blurring the boundaries and, in the words of one critic, “making them related to everybody.” This is precisely what I intended to do and the DNA study results have supported this contention. That's the underlying beauty of this story, and to miss that point is symptomatic of the too narrow focus that inevitably leads to ethnic tensions.

And so, what energy and time I have will be expended in bringing people together wherever and whenever I can. In teaching and engaging in projects that can impact how human beings – and especially our children – view their fellow human beings. That we are not just figuratively – but literally – one human family. From Africa and India, to Turkey, Portugal, and the United States of America, we are one race. Where I can make a difference in helping others to understand this, I will. Where I cannot, I'll try.

And I pledge to live by our Melungeon creed, "One People, All Colors."

I thank God for an amazing fourteen years of Chapter One and, God-willing, at least that many more for Chapter Two.