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# Goins Line

Robert Sheppard had a son named Margaret Cornish

John Gowen was a servant of William Evans

Gowen/Goins  
John Gowen was a servant of William Evans

Gowen traded slaves in (1641) to John to William Evans, plantation owner

John Gowen m. Margaret Cornish had son named Michael Gowen

Margaret fell in love with Robert Sweat - had child in 1641

Robert Sweat - planter - neighbor to Evans and Sheppard

\* Michael - John and Margaret son

1641 - John Gowen had another son - Philip  
Margaret had another child by Robert  
Sweat - Cornish - she lived on Sheppard's estate called Hog Island

Michael was placed with Christopher Stafford in VA - 1641

ART TWO

### JAMESTOWN TO THE 20TH CENTURY: CHRONICLE OF ONE MELUNGEON FAMILY

The saga of the Gowen or Goin family, the largest branch in the Melungeon family tree, begins with a lovers' triangle in early colonial Virginia. African-American John Gowen was the servant of an Englishman named William Evans in Elizabeth City, Virginia. John Gowen had first arrived in Virginia prior to 1630. John, probably born in Angola about 1615, was possibly one of a number of prisoners taken from a captured Portuguese slave ship off the coast of Angola in 1628, by the English pirate Arthur Guy. That year Captain Guy traded his stolen Angolan slaves in Jamestown, Virginia for tobacco. The plantation owner William Evans, as was the custom, offered a bid for Gowen in Jamestown and John was indentured for about the usual term of 7-10 years.

#### FIRST GENERATION circa 1615: JOHN GOWEN (or GEAWEEN)

John Gowen's neighbor was the planter Robert Sheppard. Lt. Sheppard was one of the leading leaders of the Virginia colony, serving in the Virginia House of Burgesses; North America's oldest continually existing legislature. Sheppard had a Negro servant girl named Margaret Cornish. John Gowen married Margaret and they had a son in 1635 whom they named Michael Gowen. Margaret remained bound to the household of Lt. Sheppard with her son Michael, while John Gowen worked for Evans and eventually earned release from his indenture and became North America's first recorded free black man.

In addition to the plantations of Evans and Sheppard lived another white planter named Robert Sweat (sometimes spelled "Sweet"). Margaret fell in love with Sweat and she became pregnant with his child in late 1640. The affair was exposed and she and the white man Sweat, were brought before the court. They were judged guilty of the charges and Virginia court records contain the sentence handed down on October 17, 1640.

Whereas Robert Sweat hath begotten with child a negro woman servant belonging unto Lieutenant Sheppard, the court hath therefore ordered that the said Negro woman shall be whipt at the whipping post and the said Sweat shall moreover in the forenoon do public penance for his offence at James City Church in the time of divine service according to the laws of England in that case provided."

Within 5 months of the sentencing of his wife and Robert Sweat, the African-American John Gowen petitioned the court for the freedom of the child and Margaret had produced five years earlier. The date of his suit coincides with the time Margaret would have been showing the pregnancy of her legitimate child by Sweat.

#### March 31, 1641-Suit of John Gowen:

Whereas it appeareth to the court that John Gowen, being a negro servant unto William Evans, was permitted by his said master to keep hogs and make the best benefit thereof to himself provided that the said Evans might have half the increase which was accordingly rendered unto him by the said negro and the other half reserved for his own benefit: And whereas the said negro having a young child of a negro woman belonging to Lt. Robert Sheppard which he desired should be made a Christian and be taught and exercised in the Church of England, by reason whereof he, the said negro did for his said child purchase its freedom of Lt. Sheppard with the good liking and consent of Tho: Gooman's overseer as by the deposition of the said Sheppard and Evans appeareth, the court hath therefore ordered that the child shall be free from the said Evans or his assigns and to be and remain at the disposing and education of the said Gowen and the child's godfather who undertaketh to see brought up in the Christian religion as aforesaid."

In time John Gowen remarried and had at least one other son named Philip born about 1650. Margaret bore Robert Sweat's child and later bore another child out of wedlock, surnamed Cornish. Later, Margaret Cornish was freed, yet she spent the rest of her days on a section of Sheppard's estate called 'Hog Island'. The names of Gowen, Sweat, and Cornish are borne by Melungeon descendants to this day.

#### SECOND GENERATION: MICHAEL GOWEN, SON OF JOHN GOWEN

Michael, the five year old child of John Gowen and Margaret Cornish, was removed from his mother and placed in the home of Captain Christopher Stafford of Virginia in 1641. The African-American youth remained a servant of the Stafford family until his 18th birthday. Christopher Stafford had died in the meantime, and his sister, Anne Stafford Barnhouse, legally held Michael's indenture. Anne Barnhouse also had an African-American servant

I named "Prossa". While a servant in the Stafford household, Michael Gowen had gotten a son by Prossa, and the child was named William Gowen.

In his will, Captain Stafford desired Michael to be freed from servitude upon his death. His sister carried out his wishes on October 25th, 1657. In a legal statement, Anne Barnhouse also freed Michael's young two-year old son William, but she retained the child's mother Prossa, as her servant, eventually breaking up the family.

It is not known unto all Christian people that whereas Mihill Gowen Negro of the servant to my Brother Xopher Stafford deced by his last will & Testament bearing Date the 18 of Jan 1654 had his freedom given unto him after the expiration of 4 years service unto my uncle Robert Stafford Therefore know I whom it may concern that I Anne Barnehouse for divers good causes mee hereunto moving do absolutely quitt & discharge the sd Mihill Gowen from any service & for ever sett him free from any claim of service either by mee or by any one my behalf as any part or parcell of my Estate that may be claimed by mee the said Amy Barnhouse my heyres Exers Admrs or Assignes as witness my hand and this 25 Oct 1657 Amy (AB) Barnhouse

It is not knowne unto all Xcian people that I Ame Barnehouse of Martins hundred in the County of Stafford for divers good causes & consideracons mee hereunto moving hath given unto Mihill Gowen Negro he being att this time servant unto Robert Stafford a male child borne the 25 August 1655 of the body of my Negro Prosta being appoynted by Mr. Edward Johnson 2 Sept 1655 & named William & I the said Amy Barnhouse doth bindmy selfe my heyres Exer Admr & Ass never to trouble or molest the said Mihill Gowin or his sone William or demand any service of the said Mihill or his said sone William In witness whereof I have caused this to be made & done I hereunto sett my hand & Seale this present 16 Sept 1655 Amy (AB) Barnhouse."

John Gowen and his immediate family knew how to use the judicial system of 17th century colonial America. His son Philip Gowen successfully sued for his freedom on June 16th, 1675 from John Lucas. Lucas was ordered to provide the "Negro" Phillip with "three Barrels of Corne att the Cropp" according to the will of Amy Beazley, Gowen's original mistress. Several African-American Gowens left court and land documents from 17th century Virginia.

After his release from servitude to the Staffords, Michael quickly remarried a free white woman in York County and had four sons in addition to William by Prossa. His later sons, William, Daniel, Christopher and Thomas, born from 1655 to 1660, were described as "mulatto" in surviving records. These latter generations of Michael's family quickly became light-skinned in just a few generations.

Michael Gowen moved to the adjoining Merchants Hundred Parish in James City County and received a land grant of 40 acres in 1668. Michael died in 1708, about 73 years of age.

THIRD GENERATION: THOMAS GOWEN, SON OF MICHAEL, SON OF JOHN

Because of limited space I here trace the line of Michael Gowen's youngest son Thomas who is my ancestor. Thomas, who raised and raced horses, was involved in a number of court cases in which he was either suing someone or someone was suing him. At the age of 37 in Westmoreland County he had incurred sizable debts from gambling losses. But in 1707 Thomas' misfortune was reversed when he was granted about 650 acres in Stafford County below the banks of the Potomac River according to genealogist Paul Heinegg. The land abutted the property of a man named Robert Alexander.

In a 1767 land dispute, a 70-year old deponent, Charles Griffith, related a conversation which he had with Major Robert Alexander, 43 years previously in 1724. Major Robert Alexander, who owned land adjoining the Gowens, supposedly said of them:

"He had a great mind to turn the Molatto rascals (who were then his tenants) off his land."

Griffith further stated that:

"He was at a Race in the same year where the Goings were (who then had running horses) and that the old people were talking about the Goings taking up Alexanders land and selling it to Thomas and Todd which land the old people then said was in Alexanders back line or at least the greatest part of ...and if it were not for the Alexanders land...the Goings would not be so lavish of their money of which they seemed to have plenty at that time..."

FOURTH GENERATION: WILLIAM GOWEN, SON OF THOMAS, SON OF MICHAEL, SON OF JOHN

Thomas Gowen had two sons; William born in 1680 and James born in 1683. William, the older son, moved to Stafford County near the Occaquan River where he was granted 124 acres in 1713. William married a white woman named Katherine by whom he had three sons and one daughter. William Gowen, the grandson of the African-American Michael Gowen, owned slaves who were willed to two of his children by his widow. William died in 1725.



Michael and Prossa had a son named William Gowen - Prossa stayed with Anne but William and Michael was free - Michael (Mihill) 1654

PROSSA (ProSTA)

(Johns son) Phillip Gowen sued for freedom in 1675 from John Lucas.

\* Michael had remarried - white woman in York County - had 4 sons plus William by Prossa.

- Michael moved to "Merchants Hundred Parish in James City Cty. William, Daniel, Christopher and Thomas.

Thomas had 2 sons - William b 1680 & James b. 1683. STAFFORD CTY. William m. white woman named Katherine they had 3 sons 1 daughter - William d. 1725

4TH GENERATION: JOHN GOWEN, SON OF WILLIAM, SON OF THOMAS, SON OF MICHAEL, SON OF JOHN

The oldest son of William Gowen was John, born about 1702. He married Mary Keife, daughter of Cornelius Keife, another Melungeon-related surname. They lived in Fairfax County where they own land in Pope's Head Run in 1744 and in Coquan Run in 1746, but moved to Lunenburg County by 1748 when John inherited 400 acres on Reedy Branch. About 13 years later they deeded land in Lunenburg County to their two sons, William and John.

William, grandson of Michael Melungeon  
Mary Keife - daughter of  
Cornelius Keife

5TH GENERATION: WILLIAM GOWEN (Jr), SON OF JOHN, SON OF WILLIAM, SON OF THOMAS, SON OF MICHAEL, SON OF JOHN.

William Gowen was born to John and Mary sometime between 1725-1731, in Stafford County. According to Gowen Research Foundation archives, William took a wife named Mary about 1752 and moved to Granville County, North Carolina. But a few months later he returned to Lunenburg County, Virginia where his parents lived. In 1761 he was living on the Lunenburg land deeded to him by his father. William Gowen was one of 12 jurors hearing the case of John Mullins versus Charles Yancey, defendant facing trespass, assault and battery charges in March 1761 in Lunenburg County. Mullins is a common Melungeon surname. By July 6, 1762, William Gowen had sold the land in Lunenburg County and moved to Orange County, North Carolina.

- William Gowen was b. to John and Mary in 1725-1731.  
- moved to Lunenburg City - Orange County, VA.

William was head of a Moore County family of 10 whites in the 1790 census (which was actually taken a year or two earlier). He may also have been the head of another "William Gowen" Moore County household of 10 "other free" in the same census. When there was a question of race, as there was in William's case, enumerators would often make up a duplicate census for "free colored persons" to avoid controversy. According to GRF archives, the "two" William Gowen families in Moore County were mentioned in "Ancient Records of Moore County, North Carolina". It is interesting that though there were questions about the ancestry of William Gowen, he was elected justice of the peace. William at this point is only 4 generations descended from the "Negro" Michael Gowen. Yet the writer of the record wavers between calling William white, Indian or mulatto and expressed uncertainty.

1 William - head of Moore County family list 10 whites in 1790 -  
2 William - head of Moore County family list 10 "Free other" in same census.  
- MOORE COUNTY - NC.

By strange coincidence there were two Goings families in Moore County in 1790, one being white; the other listed under the heading of "all other free persons," that is free negro, mulatto, or Indian. Both families were headed by William Goings. One William, of course the white one, was later made a justice of the peace for the county. Within the writer's recollection, some of the families held themselves above association with negroes, and their white neighbors accepted them as several notches above their black brethren. An examination of the 1850 census will show the increase in this clan, all of whom are there listed as mu-latto. Briefly, the Goings were classed exactly as were the so-called "Lumbee" Indians of Robeson County. In later years, certain of these families intermarried with negroes, and their descendants now living in Moore County are as black as the pot. Others, however, have maintained the complexion and characteristics of their more ancient ancestors. The free family lived on or about Pocket Creek, in Lee County organized from Moore County and Chatham County in 1907) or between there and Damon Springs. The writer's father once pointed out to him their location and casually remarked, "they were not negroes, but probably Indians". What became of the white family of William Goings, the writer has been unable to determine. A few years ago, a writer in the "Saturday Evening Post" wrote a story on the 'Melungeons' [maybe from the French 'melange', a mixture] who had a colony on the Clinch River in North Central Tennessee, and among whose members were Goings. The description of these people would apply almost 100% to those of Robeson County. How did the Goings get 'way up there?' An inventory of the estate of "William Goan" was itemized in Moore County Will Book A, page 322 and 323 in the late 1780s. His probate papers, if found might reveal much about the family.

\* Two Goings / Goins listed in 1790 -  
1 listed as white - The other listed as all other free persons.

6TH GENERATION: JAMES GOWEN/GOIN/GOING/GOYNE, SON OF WILLIAM (JR), SON OF JOHN, SON OF WILLIAM, SON OF THOMAS, SON OF MICHAEL, SON OF JOHN.

William and Mary Gowen had a number of sons including William Jr., John, Henry, Levy, Amos and Edward, some of whom were designated as "free colored" in Moore County. William and Mary also had a son named James Gowen, born May 3, 1755 in Lunenburg County. The surname appears under a variety of spellings including that on his Revolutionary War pension as "Goyne". According to Gowen Research Foundation Archives:

North Carolina  
Moore County  
Fayetteville Goins  
Frank, W. EMMIT - Frank's father King Ditty  
Wilson Goins - son of A. C. Goins  
St Anne's Baptist Church  
Brother Ivy - brother Frank.  
William Jr (William and Mary's son)  
(Moore County)

Several members of the Gowen family of the Northern Neck of Virginia migrated southward in 1747 to Lunenburg County also. The southern part of Lunenburg County which lay below the Meherrin River was organized in 1764 as Lee County. Their descendants "spelled the name in various ways. Generally, in Mississippi the surname became "Guynes". In Louisiana, "Goins" predominated, while in Virginia and Kentucky, "Gowan" was generally adopted."

- Meherrin River was responsible in 1764 of Moore County

At the time the Revolutionary War broke out, the Gowen family of Virginia was seven generations old. In 1775 James Gowen/Goynne was wed to a woman named Mary. Their children were John Goynne, born July 5, 1776, Sarah Goynne, born about 1789, James Goins born about 1793, and Wiley Williamson Goynne, born December 2, 1799. James was living in Camden District, South Carolina at the

James M. Mary - 1775 - children Sarah, John and James -  
b. 1755  
James was living in Camden SC in 1790

and served as a Revolutionary militiaman in a company led by Captain John Smith in Colonel John Winn's regiment. GRF archives state:

In his Revolutionary War Pension application, James Goyne stated that... "his militia unit rendezvoused at Winnsboro, near which place he resided. He stated that he served under Col John Winn. This proves that James lived in Fairfield County, South Carolina."

In 1776 James was drafted to go to Charleston in order to intercept the British Fleet that was expected to land there, under Col John Wynn in Captain John Smith's Company of militia, Lt. William Daugherty." After being stationed in Charleston for a month the company returned to Winnsborough and dismissed about the last of July, 1776. Twice more James re-enlisted in the militia, once under the command of General John Ashe from North Carolina, and later in 1779 he "volunteered to go to Georgia to fight the Indians and put himself under Capt. John Nixon". Marched to Falsom Fort on "Abuchy" (?) river, James Goyne's company overtook the retreating Indians and "a skirmish ensued in which seventeen Indians and two white men were killed and Major Ross was killed in the part of the re... (?) Later his company was placed under the command of General Benjamin Lincoln near Augusta, from whence they marched to Ashley River "at the big rice fields to met the British who were encamped there."

Discharged again in June 1779, James Goyne returned to South Carolina until he volunteered to "go to the assistance of General Greene at the siege of Ninety-Six... We met together on the road about fourteen miles from Winnsborough at the time last mentioned, we then marched to Congaree River, where we rested and endeavored to intercept Lord Francis Rawdon on his march from Ninety-Six to Charleston." After several bloody skirmishes, James was again discharged in September, 1781 and returned to South Carolina. Then in June 1782 he was drafted to "keep the Tories in Edisto in subjection" and released after a month's duty.

The Revolutionary War pension, No. 30770, was granted James Goyne on July 2, 1836.

After American independence was won, James left South Carolina about 1784 and moved to Burke County, Georgia. Five years later he moved to Warren County, Georgia until 1791 when he moved to Washington County, Georgia where he lived until 1796. Then the family moved to Hancock County until 1799, at which time they moved to Tennessee and then to St Helena Parish, Louisiana for five years. In 1804 Goyne moved to Lawrence County, Mississippi until two years later when he moved his family to Copiah County where they resided until he died in 1834. Finally James Goyne settled in Kemper County, Mississippi where he applied for his war pension.

According to GRF files:

In an interview was held in 1905 with Susan Goynes Dickerson of Live Oak county, Texas at age 80. She was a great-granddaughter of John Goyne. In the newspaper account she stated that she knew her great-grandfather and that he and his four brothers had served in the Revolutionary War". About 1791 James and Mary Goyne had become estranged and he later married Heather O'Brien. Mary lived with her oldest son John Guynes in Louisiana and later moved with the family to Copiah County, Mississippi.

EIGHTH GENERATION: JOHN GUYNES (jr), SON OF JAMES, SON OF WILLIAM (Jr), SON OF JOHN, SON OF WILLIAM, SON OF THOMAS, SON OF MICHAEL, SON OF JOHN GOWEN.

John Guynes was born to (James and Mary in Camden District, South Carolina on July, 1776, the eldest child. In Georgia, on December 8, 1800, John Guynes married Matilda Hall, daughter of Henry Hall, an American Revolution hero in the Battle of Cowpens. This Hall family is also found among Melungeons in Virginia, Tennessee and in the Carolinas. (John and Matilda had 15 children.

John Guynes followed his father James to Tennessee and later to Calcasieu parish, Louisiana in 1810. John and Matilda were "received by letter" into the Jerusalem Baptist Church in Amite County, Mississippi near present day Hillsburg in April 1812. He became one of the wealthier farmers in Mississippi and owned a dozen slaves. Some of his children married into prominent white families while others married into Melungeon-related families.

Whether John would have achieved as much success in older, more socially-conscious states like Virginia or the Carolinas in 1810 is unknown. John Guynes, like his father James, moved to newly opened frontier territories such as the District of Feliciana in the Louisiana Purchase where struggling neighbors asked fewer questions about ancestry and appearance. From John Guynes onward, this particular branch of the Gowens are officially recorded in government records only as "white", although many family members would later find evidence of a non-white past. Many of his children and grandchildren achieved prestige in mainstream America, including a state legislator, a circuit judge, army officers, pioneers and others. Gowen Foundation researcher Carroll Heard Goyne Jr. wrote:

Feliciana Parish was once part of the West Florida Territory: that area from the Mississippi River to Perdido Bay, bounded on the north by the 31st parallel and on the south [roughly] by Bayou Manchac, Lake Maurepas, Lake Pontchartrain and the Gulf of Mexico. It was often called the District of

James Goyne was in militia at Winnsboro -

Who were John and Matilda's children?

\* James Goyne Siege of Ninety Six -

was in Edisto in 1782 -

James moved to Burke County GA - 1784  
" " " to Warren County GA - 1789  
" " " to Washington Cty. GA 1796  
family moved Hancock County, GA 1799  
" " " Tenn. then to Louisiana -  
" " " to Lawrence Cty, Miss in 1804

James & Mary's daughter:

\* James and Mary Goyne divorced - James to Heather O'Brien

MINE? JAMES & MARY in Camden SC.

John Guynes was son of James and Mary in Camden, SC. b. 1776.

In GA, John m. Matilda Hall, they had 15 children

- 1810 -  
When John Guynes moved district of Feliciana they were noted as white. "passed as white"

FLA Feliciana Parish was part of West Florida Territory -

liciana. This territory remained under Spanish control even after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, and included Baton Rouge. The citizens of West Florida, tiring of Spanish rule, organized themselves and descended in force on Baton Rouge, capturing the Spanish garrison on September 23, 1810. They raised the original Lone Star Flag [later carried to Texas] and established the Republic of West Florida, installed their own government, and elected a president.

The Republic of West Florida was founded, it took the United States only 4 days to take the republic into its possession. The Republic of West Florida became the County of Feliciana. It was subsequently called Parish of Feliciana County, and later divided into several parishes as follows: Feliciana, East Baton Rouge, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Biloxi and Pascagoula.

Republic of West Fla.  
Feliciana Parish.

The early American settlers who arrived in Feliciana Parish discovered that the area was still under Spanish rule, and only Catholic churches were allowed. The nearest churches of their Baptist faith were in Amite County, Mississippi. They attended these Mississippi Churches until Louisiana became a state in 1812. After that, they established Baptist churches nearer their homes. Two of the Amite churches having Goynes [various spellings] as members were Jerusalem Baptist Church and Ebenezer Baptist Church. The Louisiana members at Ebenezer Church withdrew in 1813 to form Hephzibah Baptist Church Feliciana Parish."

John and Matilda are found on the rolls of the two Mississippi churches in 1812 and 1813. Then:

John and Matilda found on Mississippi Church rolls in 1812.  
\* Passed for white =

On November 29, 1813, the Hephzibah church minutes revealed, "Names of members present at the constitution of the Baptist Church of Christ at Hephzibah, Feliciana Parish and who subscribe to the above faith were as follows: John Guine, Mary Guine, Matilda Guine..."

John mother, wife & children were members of the 1st Protestant Ch in Louisiana Purchase.

The Melungeon John Guynes, his mother, wife and brothers and cousins, were founding members of the first Baptist church in Feliciana Parish, and therefore members of one of the first Protestant churches in the Louisiana Purchase.

John Guynes received a captain's commission in the Louisiana militia in the fall of 1812 until the decisive Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815. After the same year the family moved to Hinds County, Mississippi. "When Copiah County was organized in 1823 from Hinds County, John Goynes found himself in the new county, appearing in the Copiah County tax list of 1823, the first year of the county's existence. He paid \$2.25 on "one poll and 10 slaves." The family farm was located seven miles east of Hazelhurst, Mississippi."

John Guynes died in 1846 - (Mississippi)  
Matilda died in 1865.

John Guynes died August 15, 1840. Matilda Hall Guynes, "owner of 10 slaves, five of whom were engaged in agriculture" died January 26, 1865. Both were buried near Georgetown, Mississippi.

FIFTH GENERATION: HARMON RUNNELS GUYNES, SON OF JOHN (Jr), SON OF JAMES, SON OF WILLIAM (Jr), SON OF JOHN, SON OF WILLIAM, SON OF THOMAS, SON OF MICHAEL THE "NEGRO" SON OF JOHN GOWEN OF 1640 VIRGINIA.

Emily (1803)  
Mississippi

of the 15 children of John and Matilda, Harmon Guynes was the 13th. Harmon was born November 3, 1820 in Copiah County, Mississippi. In 1843 Harmon married Emily Whittington and moved to Scott County Mississippi within a decade of the exile of the Mississippi Choctaw to Oklahoma.

Emily was an English Whittington with ties to the Finley Melungeons and said so to be of "Indian" blood. Emily and Harmon Guynes had 8 children. Harmon moved his family to ranch country in Goliad County, Texas in the 1850s. Whatever his plan in southwest Texas, it ended with the Civil War. The family tradition has Harmon enlisting about 1863 in a Confederate company. Mortally wounded in a battle, Harmon reportedly died not long after returning home sometime in 1864.

Emily - Big Thicket  
East Texas 1860 - died in  
Walker County, Texas

Emily Whittington moved her children, mostly daughters, to the Big Thicket area of East Texas by 1880. The early death of Harmon Guynes left many questions concerning ancestry unanswered. Emily, his widow, refused to talk of ancestry. Born in 1826, Emily survived to the 20th century. She was buried in Clapp Cemetery in Walker County, Texas. The state of Texas has placed a commemorative marker at the cemetery because Emily, and possibly Harmon Guynes, were buried there. The marker claims that the land for the cemetery was purchased because the people of Trinity and Walker counties did not want "Indians" buried with whites.

Local in the East Texas descendants of Harmon Guynes grew up in the late 19th and 20th centuries on stories that we were "part Indian" or "Choctaw-Cherokee". No one had ever heard the word "Melungeon" mentioned in Trinity County. But there are a number of families in Walker and Trinity County said to be "part-Indian": Johnson, Dial, Boon, Odom, and Guynes, most of which are related by marriage. These are surnames commonly found among Melungeons, Louisiana Redbones, and Lumbees.

The youngest child of Harmon and Emily Guynes was Nancy. Nancy married Dude

ashaw in 1880 in Trinity, Texas. The maiden name of Dude's mother was Elizabeth Johnson of St. Landry's Parish, Louisiana. Some claim she was a descendant of the Virginian, Anthony Johnson, one of the original Angolans captured by Joao and Elfrith from the Portuguese merchant-slaver Sao Joao Autista in 1619. If so, the Kimbundu of the first sea voyage were still calling, melungu, meu melungu, after nearly 400 years.

In 1913, the children and grandchildren of Harmon and Emily Guynes fell prey to a multi-state scam targeting Guynes and other Melungeon families. The scheme's operators claimed the descendants of Harmon and Emily were "Indian" and were therefore owed government money. The conman, Alexander P. Powell of Laurel, Mississippi, made contracts with many of the East Texas Guynes and Louisiana Goins, offering to represent them in Washington D.C. with the promise of getting their names on the Indian Rolls.

However, by 1915 the scam had been busted and Powell was tried and convicted in Shreveport, Louisiana and sentenced to prison for wire fraud. What in their distant past caused the Guynes to fall prey to a 20th century race scheme? What questions were they seeking to answer? In 1913, nearly 300 years after the old African-American John Gowen of colonial Virginia, the deepest suspicion of unknown "colored" blood had persisted among what to the eye, were white people. Today, 18 generations and almost 400 years after John Gowen, the first free African-American in colonial Virginia, some of the questions are being answered.

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Biography: Tim Hashaw is an investigative reporter working from East Texas. He has filed stories for CBS, ABC and NBC from network affiliates. Tim has reported for radio, television, and print. Awards for Best Investigative Reporting from: The Radio and Television News Directors' Association (RTNDA), Associated Press, United Press International, the National Headliners Club and others.

Louisiana = Goins  
Family

written by Tim Hashaw -

RootsWeb's Guide To  
TRACING FAMILY TREES