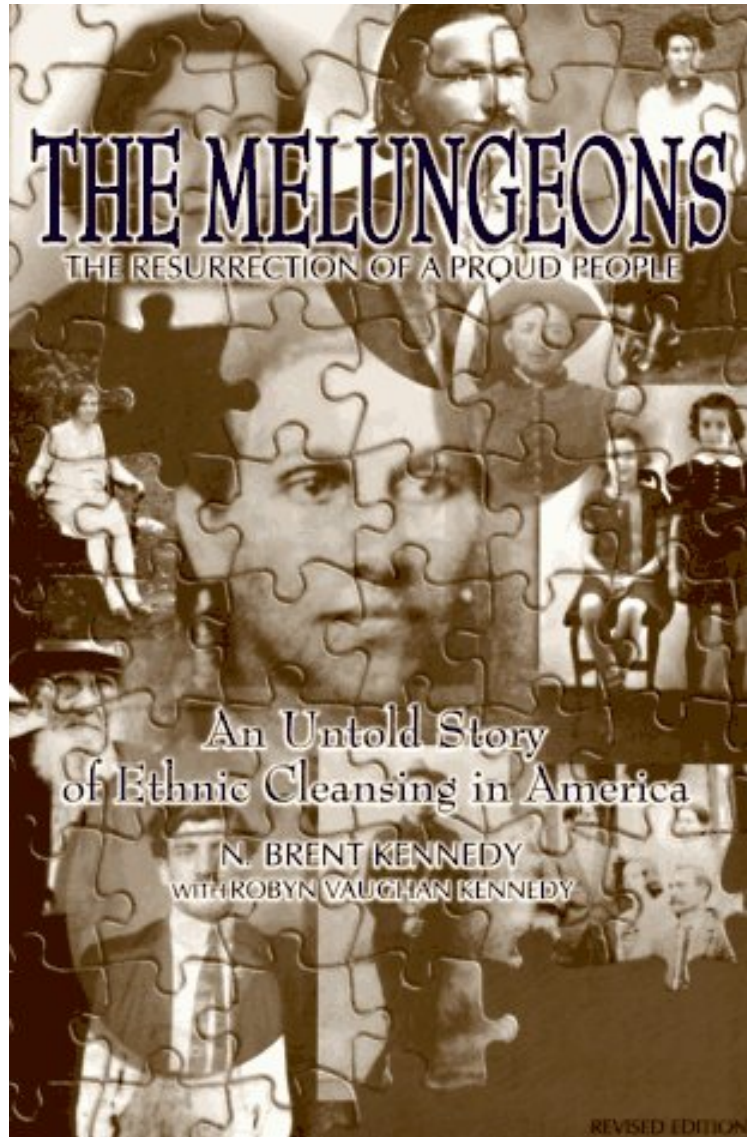


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## The Melungeons: The Resurrection of a Proud People

*N Brent Kennedy*

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**N Brent Kennedy : The Melungeons: The Resurrection of a Proud People** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Melungeons: The Resurrection of a Proud People:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Methodically-Researched and Well-Written By Elle Zeid Somewhere in the deepest region of my consciousness, the word Melungeon vaguely held place, but it wasn't until my recent reading of The Melungeons, The Resurrection of a Proud People, the excellent book written by N. Brent Kennedy with

Robyn Vaughn Kennedy that this race of people formed distinctly in my mind. As defined by Kennedy, the Melungeons are a people of apparent Mediterranean descent who may have settled the Appalachian wilderness as early as 1567, forty years before Jamestown, a people who almost certainly intermarried with the Powhatans, Pamunkeys, Creeks, Catawbans, Yuchis, and Cherokees to form what some have called, perhaps a bit fancifully, a new race, a people who built cabins and tilled the land, and, at least by the late 1700s, were practicing Christians, a people who were, a century and a half later, crushed and scattered beneath the violent onslaught of unbridled Anglo jingoism. Not only is the book a methodically researched and superbly written account of the Melungeon People, it is also an indictment of the Anglo conquerors of the New World, of their wholesale practice of ethnic cleansing of the indigenous populations, as well as of their Old World precursors to the New World whom had integrated peacefully with the natives. It is also a textbook of the true founding of America, one rather dissimilar to that penned in our history books. I discovered in Kennedy's book so many clues to my own obscure ancestry, at least to what I reckon to be my ancestry, as well as the inspiration to delve into my roots as thoroughly as he did his, and as related in his mesmerizing book. If Ancestry.com isn't doing it for you, buy this book! It just might be your pathway to the missing link in your pedigree. On the other hand, if you are hungry for a great mystery in history unearthed and responsibly revealed, *The Melungeons, The Resurrection of a Proud People*, authored by N. Brent Kennedy with Robyn Vaughn Kennedy, is for you. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By BonnieBlove it 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Richard S. Ketcham Very well-written and informative book!

As early as 1654, English and French explorers in the southern Appalachians reported seeing dark-skinned, brown- and blue-eyed, and European-featured people speaking broken Elizabethan English, living in cabins, tilling the land, smelting silver, practicing Christianity, and, most perplexing of all, claiming to be "Portyghee." Declared "free persons of color" in the late 1700s by the English and Scottish-Irish immigrants, the Melungeons, as they were known, were driven off their lands and denied voting rights, education, and the right to judicial process. The law was enforced mercilessly and sometimes violently in the resoundingly successful effort to totally disenfranchise these earliest American settlers.

As Alex Haley's book *Roots* encouraged African-Americans to search for their African history through family stories and "myths," Kennedy's own search for identity through family history has encouraged a population of mixed-race people to search for their origins. This has led to the recovery of lost pride and a new self-identity. The book has also forced academics to admit their long history of denial of the diversity of American people and to recognize the multicultural composition of the American population. -- Helen M. Lewis, Retired Professor of Sociology and Appalachian Studies Brent Kennedy is the prime mover behind the recent, and astonishing, revival of Melungeon identity. His determination to uncover and to understand his heritage makes for a fascinating story, which is still in the process of unfolding. But this is the book that started it all. -- John Shelton Reed, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill For fifty years, since I first heard the word "Melungeon" and visited their home-sties in the hills of Tennessee, I have been intrigued by the history, and mystery, of my distinctive neighbors. Plagued by two centuries of rumor, superstition, and deliberate misinformation about their origin and character, they were third-class citizens in an Appalachia already burdened by second-class stereotypes. How welcome then is Brent Kennedy's scholarly and wide-ranging search for the truth behind the Melungeons' origin. It is a fascinating work carrying an implicit reminder of the worth and pride of every human being. -- Wilma Dykeman, Tennessee State Historian and author of *The Tall Woman, Tennessee: A Bicentennial History*, and *The French Broad* About the Author N. Brent Kennedy, founder of the Melungeon Research Committee, is a native of Appalachia and a Melungeon. One day he began explaining to his parents their heritage and thus unraveled family mysteries that go back for generations. After years wondering about the mysterious dark-skinned people he had often encountered while growing up, he realized that he was indeed one of them, that his family was part of the proud, troubled heritage of the Melungeons. He earned degrees from Clinch Valley College of the University of Virginia and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.