

Clues to Hidden Native Ancestors

There are many clues to Native ancestry if you know what to look for.

Physical Characteristics

Many people are surprised to find that the physical characteristics running in their family indicate they are descendents of Native Americans. At this point I usually have someone who accuses me of perpetuating stereotypes of Native Americans. Well, the characteristics I will mention are all based on medical studies. A little research is all that is needed if someone is interested in the facts behind them.

- High cheekbones where glasses set high on the face and get all smeary on the bottom of the lens. Almond shaped almost oriental looking eyes. Lazy eyes in children. Heavy "fat" eyelids where the eyelid appears to have an extra fold. A melanin (pigmentation) in the back of the eye on the retina peculiar to Native Americans.
- "Shovel" teeth, the teeth have a ledge on the backside. Run your tongue across them, they feel almost like a shovel shape. Large front teeth with a slight or more than slight gap. Lack of the Carrabelli cusp on the maxillary first molars, which is missing in Native Americans.
- Large heavy earlobes.
- Crooked fingers particularly the little finger or pinky.
- An inverted breastbone. Often called a Chicken Breast. The bone actually makes an indentation in the chest.
- Little toes that lie under the next one. A second toe longer than the big toe. A wider space between the big toe and second one. An extra ridge of bone along the outside of the foot.

Stamford University researchers have a new method of scanning a genetic mutation that exists only in the samples of Indian populations in North/South American and in Eskimo groups.

Comparing families characteristics to old photographs of recognized Native Americans is all the proof many people need. Some who require more proof can explore the scientific and medical avenues. While those whose ultimate goal is tribal recognition, must accumulate pertinent documentation of their direct line (birth, marriage and death records) back to the recognized Native American Ancestor.

Some of the information concerning Physical Characteristics which can help you determine if you are Native, were taken from an article by NAAH Contributing Editor Cones Kupwah Snowflower in NAAH #14 July 1996 "Let's Get Physical". Snowflower is a Shawnee Genealogist familiar with all of the tribes in the Ohio Valley area. She can be reached at 204 Rome-Hilliard Road Columbus Ohio 43228.

The scientific and medical information was gleaned from an article in the Family Tree publication of the Ellen Payne Odom Genealogy Library P O Box 1110 Moultrie, GA,

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31776-1110 (912) 985-6540 FAX (912) 985-0935. Back issues of the Family Tree, when available, are \$3.50, which includes s/h. The information in the article was credited to T.L.& M. Genealogy published by the Talbot Library and Museum P. O. Box 349 Colcord OK 74338.

“White” Indians

According to Cones Kupwah Snowflower, many early Ohio "white" settlers were hidden Native Americans who moved west as the whites approached. The people of many Nations who were with Tecumseh at the Battle of the Thames (1813) were automatically considered outlaws, and not allowed to return home. As it became harder for them to live in exile, they filtered back in twos or threes, sometimes whole families.

The English Quakers and German Amish took them in, protected them, often claiming them as family members. So take a close look at any ancestor who just appears in an area of Amish or Quakers. Living among them but not practicing that particular religion, especially after the removal act of 1832.

Also, in 1832 there were 600 Shawnee on the Wapakoneta Reservation in north western Ohio, when the Army showed up and ordered them to pack and leave. 300 arrived at the first Shawnee reservation, in what was to become Kansas City Mo. What about the others? Well, they went far enough away, where they thought no one would recognize them, and changed their appearance. If they spoke fluent English they claimed to be English. If they spoke broken English - German or Dutch.

If each of these Shawnee had four children, that is 1200 people in one generation. We are now seven generations down the road. So those original Shawnee could have produced 8400 descendants who are part of the current US population. And as Snowflower says, "If one group did it, why not others?"

Hidden Ancestry

Many researchers are unaware of their Native American Ancestry, because it has been hidden for generations. Due to fear of removal - relocations - adoptions out of the tribes - children taken to boarding school – and prejudice. Only the most trusted child in each generation was told. In my mother's family, the most trusted child was in the line of Merna Veatch Urso of Washington Pa. Through Merna we learned that Great Great Great Grandmother Lydia Adams was a full Shawnee from the mouth of the Youghiogeny River.

Lydia and her husband, Samuel D Adams, were said to have had several children, but we only have information on one daughter. Ann Jane Adams b. Indiana County 20 November 1836. Nine year old Ann Jane was put in a straw strewn room to watch her mother (Lydia) and sisters die in 1845 of smallpox. They were buried where Union Station now stands in Pittsburgh Pa. The Historical Society, and Methodist Church verified it had been a Methodist Burial Ground, but there are no records.

The family was told the burial ground had been dug up and used for gravel along the railroad tracks. Then according to a newspaper article in 1902, the bones had been ground up and used as mortar in the walls of the Station. My research for Lydia and her two daughters' eventual resting place has discounted the horror stories. And I hope

researching records of their reburials will lead us to the names of Lydia's other daughters, and her Shawnee family.

Hiring Genealogists

Don't have the time to do on site research? Considering hiring a Genealogist? While most Genealogists are qualified to help, if your goal is Tribal recognition, you will need a Certified American Indian Lineage Specialist (C.A.I.L.S.). They conduct research to determine descent from a historical Indian Tribe indigenous to North America, and are familiar the pertinent materials and applicable standards within this specialty. The only problem is there are very few C.A.I.L.S. in the United States. There are many uncertified researchers who are very good at helping others, but there are even more who take the money, even though they don't know what they are doing.

Whether you do your own research or hire a genealogist, you must document your ancestor before contacting any Tribal authority. According to a representative of the Cherokee Nation in Tahlequah OK, they have neither the time nor resources to do the work for you. They will aid you only after you locate an ancestor who appears on the Cherokee Tribal Final Roll, and their roll number.

Native Diseases

In addition to the physical attributes mentioned, there are five major diseases that we look for in Native American Families.

- Alcoholism. Everyone knows about the drunken Indian. Many attribute this to the lack among Native Americans of an enzyme which converts alcohol in the bloodstream.
- Arthritis.
- It is beginning to appear that Fibromyalgia is also related to Native ancestry.
- Diabetes.
- Heart Disease.
- Kidney problems, including kidney stones.
- Also noted are numerous family instances of thyroid problems, both hypo and hyper.

Oral Traditions

Your investigative skills will be tested trying to figure out the clues you come across in your ancestral research. You must study your ancestral heritage to best be able to understand the clues that come to you from your oral family traditions. Unfortunately, many consider the tribal oral traditions mere myth, when if one truly understands and listens, they can glean factual information pertaining to their research.

Elder Relatives

If your family has a story about a Native Ancestor, go to the oldest living person who will talk about it and ask them to write down the story, date and sign it, and have the paper notarized. This piece of paper could prove to be your most important piece of

information.

Don't have a family story about a Native ancestor, but your research leads you to think your ancestor was Native? The same advice still applies. You will have stories that are actually about a Native Ancestor, you just have to look harder for the clues. Finding a Native Ancestor is difficult if they were not on one of the rolls, but not impossible. If no one will talk, keep in mind that our elders were cautioned to keep the information a secret for the safety of the family.

In some cases prejudice still prevails, so it may be best not to tell older relatives you are looking for a Native ancestor. I have had a few researchers tell me that when they approached an elderly relative for information they were informed in no uncertain terms that "there were no *#/% Indians in their family." Start by asking them for the basic information - names - places and dates (birth and death). The place is vital to determining to which tribe your ancestor belonged.

One of the first books I reach for when trying to help someone figure out what tribe they should look at is the Atlas of the North American Indian by Carl Waldman. The atlas provides some tribal migratory routes, where the tribes lived at various times, etc.

Think You're White?

Grow up believing you were totally white, but constantly being mistaken for Indian?

For years I didn't know of my own heritage. I was constantly amazed by people who would come up and ask me what tribe I was from. I felt complimented, but thought they were confused. Though I actually had early confirmation of my heritage.

When I was in elementary school I was a tomboy. I loved being barefoot, and used to take my shoes off even in school. Until the day we traced our feet and I my feet were different. My big toes are shorter than the next toe, with a wider gap between the toes. I thought I was deformed and started wearing socks even without shoes or sat with my feet under me to hide them. A mother helping in the class noticed the change. She told me that in some tribes, feet like mine were a sign of Indian royalty. She actually used a different word I didn't understand, that she explained was like a princess. Even though she was Cherokee, I didn't believe her. I just accepted her reassurance as any young child would.

I was a senior in High School in 1974, when we found out my mother's Great Great Grandmother was Full Shawnee. In 1981 an Army Doctor commented that he'd only seen toes like mine once before. A roommate who always went barefoot had the weird toes too. And when they asked him what was wrong with his feet he said they were "just Indian feet".

Red/Black/Slaves

Don't be surprised to find information categorizing your Native ancestor as black - negro - freeman of color - mulatto - or slave. Some states had no designation for Native Americans. If a few years later, the same record lists this ancestor as white, you are most likely looking at a Native American, because the category never changed to white for African Americans.

The designation of slave isn't too surprising either, because many Native Americans were sold into slavery. The Chickasaw sold 500 Choctaw taken in battle by 1700. There were 12,000 Apalachees and Timucuan sold through the Carolina slave markets.

There are many cases of Red/Black ancestors - sources for this area of research can be found in back issues of *Back To The Blanket*, a Cherokee Native American Journal. Vol. 3 No. 6 had an article titled "Tribal Records Reveal Black Indians Tri-Racial Families" and mentions the book *Black Indian Genealogical Research*. There is also the *Frontier Freedman's Journal* and *Black Indian Genealogy Research :African American Ancestors Among the Five Civilized Tribes*, by Angela Y. Walton-Raji.

With the Red/Black mix you could be looking at a Melungeon ancestor. The majority of Melungeons lived in Tennessee, but they were also found in Virginia, Kentucky, and North Carolina. They are said to be an off-shoot of the Native American Croatans, and their culture resembles that of the Croatan-related Lumbee Indians of North Carolina.

National Archives

The National Archives microfilms of original documents contain the rolls that genealogists and tribal offices go by in determining your Native Ancestry. But, there aren't records for every reservation or tribe for every year. As it was impossible to take a census on some reservations, and some rolls were lost over the years.

People who maintained a formal affiliation with a tribe under Federal supervision are listed. Some Eastern tribes have never been under federal jurisdiction. And because others did not maintain a tribal connection, their names do not appear on the INDIAN CENSUS ROLLS 1885-1940 censuses which are available on National Archive Microfilm Publication M595.

Other records in the National Archives include: The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) education, employment, financial and business affairs, health, land ownership, and legal rights. BIA field offices, agencies, and schools. Records are arranged and described by Indian Agency. Some records are restricted for privacy reasons.

Records relating to Native Americans may be found among the records of U.S. Attorneys and Marshals, Fair Employment Practice Committee, the Federal courts, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Mines, and National Park service. Veterans Pensions, Service records, microfilm files of the War Department Collection of Post-Revolutionary War Manuscripts covers 1784-1811, the Registers of Enlistments in the US Army 1798-1914, and about Indian Scouts 1866-77, 1878-1914.

And there are Passport applications. Unlike today's passports, which are for foreign travel, early passports were used for domestic travel allowing people to travel between states and territories.

Tapping Into Dreams

I am often asked to what lengths I will go to find information. It is my firm belief that our ancestors want to be found. They are as proficient in death as they were in life of covering their tracks. So we must find that part in each of us which still thinks "Native" to guide us in our search. I review many books outside the realm of Genealogy in my search. The cultural books on every tribe can lead you to clues you would otherwise

miss.

If someone wants to go to a psychic, hire a genealogist, psychic archeologist or a private detective, try hypnosis and/or past life regression, if it works for them, I see no reason not to try it.

I tell people to start a random thought and dreams journal. How do you know that the random thought or dream which led you to finding some piece of the puzzle, wasn't placed in your mind by one of your ancestors? Many researchers, feeling stuck without guidance on where to look next for information, have reported looking to their dreams for answers. Before you discount this avenue of locating information, consider how our ancestors trusted their dreams to guide them throughout their lives. Some researchers take comfort in dream stories about the ancestor for whom they are searching, while others purposely tell themselves what to dream about by repeating the question they want an answer to, and let their dreams guide them to the answer.

I would like you to consider how Psychic Archeology can impact on Native American Ancestry Research. What if you knew someone who could tell you all about your Native American Ancestor just by holding a family heirloom? For those who are even slightly interested, I recommend the following books: *RED SNAKE and RUNNING BEAR* author Psychic Archeologist George McMullen transports the reader back in time. In the foreword, Jim Robbins describes George McMullen's unusual skills at divining what ancient objects are and were used for, as he (psychometrizing) holds the item. His two psychic informants, who are best on matters concerning Native Americans, transport George back in time, where the stories of these ancient artifacts unfold in his minds eye.

The account of Red Snake and his grandson Running Bear's lives is riveting, and gives us insight into the changes our ancestors experienced with the influx of white men. The whites brought with them not only diseases up to then unknown among our ancestors, but the end of our ancestors' way of life, their spirituality and connection to nature.

In *ONE WHITE CROW*, George McMullen provides the reader with the papers from one of Canada's pre-eminent archeologists, Dr. Norman Emerson, who worked with the author on numerous psychic archeological projects on three continents - testing the potential of this up till then under-utilized field of "intuitive archeology".

I am not a TV watcher. But on three separate occasions, I took a break from the computer to watch TV. What made me take breaks at just those times, I do not know. But I know that the feeling that I had to, was very strong each time. First, I came upon a rerun episode of *Unsolved Mysteries* where they profiled three Genealogists who followed the clues from their dreams to locate their ancestors. One researcher repeatedly dreamt of a painting. Years later he went to England and at a museum found the exact painting from his dream depicting his Ancestor.

Second, was a program on the Learning Channel about Ancient Psychics, where they profiled Native American Psychic Mary Summer Rain. She has written a series of books, one specifically on Dreams. It is not unusual to have research-related dreams. I have had many researchers tell me that they had trouble remembering very old conversations with relatives about their ancestors. Then they would dream about the exact conversation, which helped them fill in the blanks.

Third, I came upon a program called Antiques Roadshow as they were talking to an African American gentleman who had a very old book about Native Americans, in which he found his Cherokee ancestors' birth certificate and 1907 claim application.

Was it intuition, coincidence, or my ancestors telling me to take those breaks? I don't know. But you can bet I will continue to act on these feelings.

On Being Cherokee

Many beginning to research their Native American Ancestors soon learned that the white settlers thought the only "safe" Indian was a Cherokee. And our ancestors claimed to be Cherokee because of this. So pay particular attention to the area where your Native ancestor was born and lived. Historically, the area for Cherokees was in southern Tennessee and North Carolina. Popular belief is if your ancestor does not come from this area, chances are that they belonged to some other tribe. But the territory covered by Cherokee was much larger. And the Cherokee were friendly with many other tribes and there were marriages between them. So your Cherokee ancestor may actually be Cherokee.

Other things to watch for as clues to Hidden Native Ancestors

- Did your ancestors smoke a pipe, or were they known to belong to a Pipe Club, Smoking Club or society? This could be a euphemism for an Indian Ceremony!
- Native children were placed for adoption during the time of removal, adoptions taking place during the period from 1825 to around 1850.
- Households with an unusual amount of "servants." It could be the servants were Natives.
- In many areas Indians could not own land, so look at ancestors who were tenant farmers. But there were also Natives who were given land in return for military service.
- Our Native Male Ancestors were outstanding hunters, great trackers, extremely handy at making their own tools etc. Many Native Female Ancestors were Healers with unusual powers. People who could stop blood or take the fire out of burns, and midwives. Also planters were often able to grow gardens in areas otherwise thought to be barren.
- If you have an ancestor who was thought to be more than a little eccentric. For instance if your ancestor was not a member the recognized faith of the area. Is there a story with a hidden meaning such as "they went out into the woods and spoke with the spirits?" NATIVE!
- Many hidden natives lived in very small towns where everyone was related. It was not uncommon for them to stay within their own community and marry people they knew. So you may find you have relatives with double chins, for example, or is Grandma on your father's side also your Aunt on your mother's side?
- Gravesite Symbols. If you locate an ancestor's burial place, photograph the stone.

Shawnee Genealogist Cones Kupwah Snowflower urges that we look carefully at the markings.

- Iroquois People believed the Willow was the tree of life, and planted willows on their graves. When unable to do this, they carved them on the gravestones. So, if a headstone has a willow on it, you are most likely to be looking at an Iroquois-speaking person, like the Wyandot and Seneca in Ohio. But willows have appeared on graves known to be Shawnee in Kentucky.
- For Algonquin (Shawnee, Miami, Ojibway, or Delaware) look for oak trees, oak leaves, branches or acorns.
- If you find ivy, think Woodland Cree, usually Canadian people, but Cree graves have been found in Ohio.
- Bears - Bear Clan. Deer - Deer clan, etc...
- Rising Suns could be Headdresses. So could sunflowers. Look for faces in the center.
- Strange looking daisies. These just might represent Spirit Wheels.
- A very old stone with a carving that almost looks like a tree, could be ceremonial sage.
- Tobacco stalks.
- Large carving of lilies. Look at the leaves. Are they leaves or feathers?
- Large trees interspersed with the headstones, especially if the trees are Willow, Oak or Cedar.
- Eight sided walled cemeteries. The eight-sided formation is as close as you can come to a circle. Circles are always important to Native People.
- Nicknames. Watch for nicknames. What we think of as nicknames may be native names. Yes, our ancestors had given names by which they would be known officially and by outsiders. But in the familiar communities they were known by their Native names. If you enquire about your ancestor by only the official name, they may not know who you are asking about, but if you ask about the nickname, they know immediately who you mean.
- According to Snowflower, be suspicious of any very "white" sounding name in the period from 1825 to the Civil War. Names like George Washington Green, Andrew Jackson Matheny, Isaac Newton Ward, William Jennings Bryon Bollinger. If you want your children to appear white, and give them a name everyone will know is "white," people will think you so admired that man that you couldn't resist naming a child after him. It serves two purposes. Of course, there were people who did so admire someone, but it is more likely to be an attempt to protect a child.

Other Tips

Native American Ancestry Hunting is an intensive area of study. This type of search requires not just a working knowledge of genealogy. One must also consider the history of this continent, in addition to each tribe's history; culture; languages, or rather the many dialects; travel patterns; and life styles.

Not everyone is aware of many tribal taboos such as not marrying into one's own clan. Or that some tribes were Matrilineal while others were Patrilineal.

Non-BIA-card-carrying Native Americans and part Native Americans outnumber the BIA recognized Native Americans 20-1 in the U.S. They make up an unknown percentage of the four out of ten adults in this country who are somewhat interested in their roots, and the seven percent, or nineteen million people who are greatly involved in family research.

Take a good long look at any pictures of your ancestors. Don't assume they look dark because the pictures are old. Compare them to published photos of Native Americans.

Laurie Beth Duffy