

Cherokee DNA Studies II

*More Real People Who Proved the
Geneticists Wrong*

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and

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Part 2



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1 MIXED RESULTS

Anthropology demands the open-mindedness with which one must look and listen, record in astonishment and wonder that which one would not have been able to guess.

—Margaret Mead

The final phase of our DNA project began enrolling participants in 2014. They came from all walks of life and every part of the country. Diana McDargh, a caregiver for children with special needs from Ohio, was the first. Since the beginnings of DNA testing, she and her brother James had wanted to find out, just for their own personal knowledge, whether their genetics matched their genealogy. They both identified as American Indian and African American and thought of themselves as Cherokees. A great-grandmother had walked the Trail of Tears. In March of 2008 they sent in a specimen to determine what their mitochondrial DNA could tell them about their mother's mother's mother's lineage. It came back V, a rare haplogroup in the world. The same story would be repeated over and over again.

So, do Diana and James have Native American ancestry? Their autosomal results indicate they do, even if a question mark hangs over their mother's haplogroup. American Indian is their no. 2 megapopulation and they have matches to Cherokee and Lumbee. There are also high matches to African and African American populations. Their case is not dissimilar to others discussed in this book. Diversity is an old story with Cherokees.

What's new is the role played by autosomal matches in creating a more complete picture of that diversity. Diana took our DNA Fingerprint, an autosomal test, in 2013, and her full-ancestry matches were updated with *More Real People*, the book you are reading. DNA Consultants has been able to make significant strides in the number and variety of populations in its database. In a big leap forwards we brought the number of Native American

tribes/nation tested to over sixty, including three Cherokee populations, one of which represents enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.¹²

How admixed are Cherokees, when did admixture begin, and what were the historical highlights for admixture before they were removed from their Appalachian homeland and became a formally constituted Native American nation? How much American Indian DNA do enrolled Cherokees have as opposed to non-federally-recognized Cherokees? Do Cherokees have Sub-Saharan African lines? Jewish? How old are those strains of admixture and how mutually exclusive or compatible and tribally “normal.” These are some of the questions our participants deserved to know the answers to if answers were possible. Many had been debarred from being considered Cherokees or even of American Indian descent on the basis of DNA results. Some were even mocked for claiming American Indian ancestry. Even if they were not interested in becoming a member of a tribe or actively pursuing the connection, their identity, sense of belonging and self-esteem were of paramount interest and consideration.

Before the publication of enrolled data, DNA Consultants’ in-house samples represented the only tribal reference population. Excitingly, these limited data did validate and confirm one whole group’s tribal origins—the Western Cherokee Nation of Arkansas & Missouri. This tribe’s executive director, Murl Dean Pierson, wrote to us shortly after we introduced our Cherokee DNA Test in 2014. On June 1, 2018, his tribe concluded a DNA case study with 26 members taking the test. All had genealogies on file documenting Cherokee or Western Cherokee/Old Settlers ancestry. The results were analyzed in a long report written by Larry DeWayne Wingo. It showed that 21 members or 80% of Western Cherokee members had a high match to U.S. Cherokee Admixed (n=62), the first available dataset, and 100% of Western Cherokee significantly matched the second Cherokee population that came on stream, U.S. Cherokee Admixed (n=92). Members consistently also matched populations like Native American – Michigan (n=29), Native American – Lumbee (n=106) and Native American – Florida (n=105).

This was reassuring news for the Western Cherokees, and their autosomal matches began to shed some light on the wide diversity of participants in Phase III.

Gradually, some common enigmas were emerging with autosomal DNA. Or were they possibly errors? Call it the Cher syndrome but a majority of our

¹² U.S. Cherokee Enrolled (n=33) data are part of 31 tribes published in a major study by J. Ng et al, “Native American Population Data Based on the Globalfiler Autosomal STR Loci,” *Forensic Science International: Genetics* 24 (Sept. 2016) e12-e13, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsigen.2016.06.014>.

anomalous Cherokees were receiving high Armenian matches—yes, Armenian, not American. That was a new population not available before.¹³ On the flip side of the issue, a few customers who had no way at all to have *any* New World ancestry got Cherokee as a top match! What was going on?

Jan Franz's Genealogy

One of the “secret Armenians” was Jan Franz, and her story is revealing. After testing her mitochondrial DNA, she took the autosomal DNA Fingerprint Test as a follow up, and it brought even more surprises. Born in Florida and originally an adoptee, she did not meet her birth parents until she was in her thirties. Her biological mother was the first to tell her she had Cherokee heritage as well as Scots-Irish and other nationalities.

“I knew before that,” says Franz. “There’s no explaining it, I just knew.” Bagpipe music always gave her goose bumps. In her teens growing up in rural Virginia, her classmates called her “half breed.” She wore feather earrings and dyed her auburn hair black. In 2008, she married Chuck Franz, also part Cherokee, in a traditional bonding ceremony at Yahoo Falls, Kentucky. They both became active members of the Piqua Shawnee Tribe, which accepts admixed natives of all backgrounds.

In the years since then, the litigation paralegal and artist built a family tree that goes back to the 1600s. She verified historical figures known to have intermarried with the Cherokee—Saunders, Sizemore and Green—and traced a number of Melungeon connections as well as Mennonite and Pennsylvania Dutch lines. One connection on her mother’s side snakes back to Jonathan Greenblanket Green, a Seneca chief who signed the Buffalo Creek Treaty of 1788. Chief Green was married to Betsy Jemison, whose mother was Mary Jemison of “captivity narrative” fame in the history books.

Franz’s mitochondrial DNA was tested in 2012 in Phase II and came out H11a. This very old subclade of H (the most common European lineage) is found across most of northern, central and eastern Europe, but also in Central Asia, where it might have been propagated by Indo-European migrations. Franz’s rare form of it is unique. This means its exact set of mutations is unmatched anywhere in the world, at least according to reported data. Strictly speaking, we can’t say it is more common here or there, or that it likely comes from any one region or country. Such rarity has been a regularly occurring event in the Cherokee project. It was true of Diana

¹³ The Armenian population data set represents DNA samples from 404 unrelated individuals residing in four historically Armenian regions: 105 individuals from the Ararat Valley, Armenia, 95 from Gardman, Azerbaijan, 103 from Sasun, Turkey, and 101 from Lake Van, Turkey. R. K. Lowery et al, “Regionalized Autosomal STR Profiles among Armenian Groups Suggest Disparate Genetic Influences,” *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 146 (2011), pp. 171-78.

McDargh's V. Again and again, the haplotype matched no one—unless it possibly matched other Cherokee descendants.

As a preliminary step to understanding her unusual mitochondrial haplotype, Franz's maternal line was carefully traced in vital records by our genealogists. The descent led back to Elizabeth, who married a Way (Scottish surname), and whose female descendants were registered as non-white in South Carolina records. Here was a robust signal of African and American Indian mixture. A term frequently encountered for such a mixture in colonial history is Mustee, meaning half Native American, half African.

Mother: Gail Annette Greene (b. 1940) Fla.

Grandmother: Lucile Aurora Futch (1914-2002) Fla.

Great-grandmother: Daisy McArthur (1896-1998) Fla.

Great-great-grandmother: Martha L. (Lulu) Green (b. 1879) S.C.

3rd-Great-grandmother: Louisa Wade(1861-1920) S.C.

4th-Great-grandmother: Mary Way (b. 1839 d. May 30, 1920), race:
black/non-white, occupation: midwife, S.C.

5th-great-grandmother: Elizabeth Way (maiden name unknown, b. 1822,
S.C.)

The trail disappears after Elizabeth. Blacks are not named in pre-Civil War records. So, Elizabeth's genealogy becomes untraceable. We speculate her husband may have been Joseph Way, born about 1808, in South Carolina. The rest of Franz's tree has firm roots in parts of Georgia inhabited once by Apalache, Yamasee, Uchee and Creek Indian tribes. There is a small possibility of Cherokee connections with her Sa(u)nders families in North Georgia, though this can probably be discounted. Otherwise, no definite Cherokee ancestor can be identified.

When the company added more autosomal populations in 2015, Franz retested. She had begun to suspect she had Middle Eastern ancestry in addition to Native American. Her mother's mother, we learned, was named Lucille Aurora Futch (a corruption of Fuchs, a German-Jewish surname) and had jet-black hair. Other ethnicities started to come into focus. Those names, I told her, were an important clue. Usually genealogy is about surnames but sometimes it is about female first names. Melungeons, an ethnic group from the same Tennessee/Virginia region as the Cherokees, were fond of giving a daughter a name that started with Lu- or Lou-. Scuttlebutt says it's a reminder your ancestors come from Lusitania, the ancient name for Portugal. Consider Lucinda, Louise, Lucille and Lucretia. Bizarre forms like Louhanna (the Blevins and Bolling families) and Lucinderella (the Cooper family) and Luta Mae (my wife's Box family, originally Fox) are known to occur. Revealingly, Franz's South Carolina and Georgia branches include the names Lulu, Lovey,

Lurency and Luvaney.¹⁴ In a later chapter, we will see the explanation for these wild flights of fancy in Apalache Indian naming traditions.

How Armenian does Jan Franz appear to be according to autosomal DNA? In her megapopulation index, Armenian comes out at the very top and Middle Eastern is no. 2, with American Indian following as the no. 3 result. One of four Armenian populations, Gardman, Azerbaijan, is very high, just below Afghan, Turkish and Cherokee, and in another section of her report, Armenian is the no. 3 hit. It comes after Northern Ireland and the Netherlands (both well adduced in her genealogy), and it is followed by England/Wales, France, Scotland, Italy and Portugal—nationalities also strongly represented in her known ancestry. Franz tells us she is not aware of any Armenian connections in her family tree. No other company's testing implicated Armenia.

About the same time as this controversy was brewing, a man in Canada contacted customer service with a question about his results. Why was his no. 1 world match Cherokee? He told us all four grandparents were born in Armenia of Armenian ancestry "all the way back." No one ever suspected Native American DNA in the family.



Armenian woman. Prokudin-Gorskii Collection.



Cher.

¹⁴ Others from our family history files are Lou Ann, Lou Ella, Lou Nell, Loudella, Loudie Bell, Louisa, Louisa Ann, Louise, Louisiana, Louiza, Louverna, Louvice, Louvina, Lovice, Lovida, Lovie, Lovine, Luallan, Lucetta, Lucia, Lucille, Lucina, Lucinda, Lucretia, Lucy, Luida, Lula, Luta Mae, Luna, Lura, Lurena, Luticia, Luvernia and Luvina. This does not include middle names. My (Donald Yates) mother's name is Bessie Louise. My sister's is Betty Louise. Male names as well are sometimes chosen for the same reasons: Louie, Louis, Lucien, Lucius, Ludovic.

The Cherokee-Armenian confusion led us to investigate the genealogy of the entertainer Cher. Where did she get Armenian ancestry? Was she Cherokee too? Were the two strains somehow mingled in her family tree? Was there any reason why Armenians should be drawn to live among or marry Cherokees? The superstar at one time claimed she was one-sixteenth Cherokee on her mother's side. We conducted exacting genealogy research to dig up some answers.

The Goddess of Pop was born Cherilyn Sarkisian, May 20, 1946, in El Centro, a southern California town near the Mexican border. Her mother, Georgia Holt, was an occasional model and bit-part actress who claimed Irish, English, German and Cherokee ancestry. Her father, John Sarkisian, was an Armenian American truck driver with drug and gambling problems. He was purely Armenian.

Cher's mother was reportedly born Jackie Jean Crouch in Kensett, Arkansas, June 9, 1927. Yet no census record naming her could be found for 1930, when she would have been three, or for 1940, when she would have been 13, five years before she was said to have married John Sarkisian, Cher's father. Cher's maternal grandmother, Lynda Inez Gulley Crouch, is equally sketchily documented. Supposedly, she was still living in 2006, when she would have been in her nineties. We tell genealogy research customers no one can have hidden consistently from decennial census takers scouring the country, who began their jobs in 1790. Everyone leaves signs they were here. But we were frankly stumped by Cher's mother and grandmother. Perhaps the 1950 federal census, scheduled to be made public in 2022, will throw light on these mysteries.

As usual, men are easier to find in records than women. Cher's maternal grandfather was a cinch for us to trace. He was Roy Malloy Crouch, born in Arkansas in 1905. Crouch died in Oklahoma City in 1969. He was supposedly 17 when Jackie Jean (or Georgia), Cher's mother, was born. His bride, Lynda Inez Gulley, would have been 13. Crouch's occupation is given on census records as pastry baker. According to publicity information in later years, he moved from town to town looking for work and taught his young daughter how to sing and play guitar. At 6, Jackie Jean was performing on an Oklahoma City radio station, and by 10 she had sung with bandleader Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys. Jackie Jean said in later years that she attended 17 junior high schools.

According to a consensus of information, the father and daughter settled in a rundown one-room dwelling in Los Angeles. Teenaged Jackie Jean worked in a donut shop. She married John Sarkisian in 1946. They divorced a year later, remarried in 1965, and divorced again in 1966. Cherilyn was born in 1946. Around this time, Jackie Jean changed her name to Georgia Pelham. After divorcing Sarkisian, she had several more husbands: Chris Alcaide, John Southall (with whom she had daughter Georgeanne in 1951), Joseph

Harper Collins, Gilbert LaPiere, and Hamilton Holt. Gilbert LaPiere legally adopted Cherilyn and Georgeanne, changing their last names to LaPiere.

Cher's mom's genealogy is a quagmire, but it's been valiantly reconstructed by William Addams Reitwiesner.¹⁵ It goes back ten generations and could conceivably contain a very small amount of Cherokee. Let's see!

Did Cher Have Any Cherokee Ancestry?

There are arguments for and against Cher's American Indian admixture. Cher's forebears on her mother's side appear uniformly and consistently to be Scots-Irish, Scottish, Irish, English, German or Dutch. Some of the families involved were pioneers who migrated across the Mississippi from Cherokee lands in Tennessee about the time of Indian Removal. Names in Cher's family tree that appear on Cherokee rolls include Bookout, Carter, Waldron (Waldon), Webber, Robinson, Moon, Clark, Pearce, Green, Moore, Barnes and Brown. There are many Crouches on the rolls. But one searches in vain for revealing marriage patterns or repeated alliances between part-Cherokees in the same places. Cher's maternal ancestors did not let the grass grow under their feet.

If Cher was one-sixteenth Cherokee, at least one of her eight maternal great-great-grandparents was possibly half Cherokee. We found their names on census records as William Howard Crouch, Mary Ann Bookout, William Martin Green, Julia Ann Bryant, Thomas Gulley (b. 1836), Delilah Donaho (b. Georgia, ancestors Irish), Frederick Fritsch (b. in Germany) and Margaret Ann Stewart (b. 1835 in Tenn. of Scots-Irish parents). None of these can have been even one-quarter Cherokee, though, much less a half blood, given the times and migrations. Even if four of them were, liberally estimated, one-sixteenth Cherokee, totaling one-quarter in that generation, coming down the generations that would make Cher 1/64. Does that count?

When we suggested in our blog that Cher might not have any Cherokee, a reader named Annita J. (Taylor) Fulton replied, almost indignantly, that our information was incorrect:

My great-grandfather, Silas Clayton Green and Cher's great-grandmother, Laura Belle Green were brother and sister. Our great-great-grandfather was Cherokee and his father had more Cherokee blood because of his parents. I have this documentation in my family history. Cher is listed as my 1st cousin, 3 times removed. I think that's 3rd cousins. We have never met, although I was told that one of my first cousins had been in contact with Cher's mother. We came from

¹⁵ William Addams Reitwiesner, "Ancestry of Cher," <http://www.wargs.com/other/sarkisian.html>.

Arkansas, my great-grandfather from Independence County and later our family settled in Izard County.¹⁶

As we'll see in a later chapter, even chiefs and elders among the Cherokee around 1820 had as little as one-eighth. Passed down the generations to a descendant born in 1960, this would make him or her less than one-percent Cherokee.

Armenian Side

On the other side, her father's, Cher's Armenian ancestry is plain to see. One can easily reconstruct it with standard genealogy searches, census records, ships passenger lists and birth and death records. Her father, John Paul Sarkisian, was born March 23, 1926, in Oakland, California. He died January 28, 1985, in Fresno, California. He was all Armenian and he spent much of his life in Armenian communities. Celebrity trivia: he was named Archde George at birth. His father, George, after whom he was named, had arrived in New York from Turkey on the S.S. Philadelphia on September 26, 1909. It was the height of the second major outbreak of Armenian massacres. Johnny's mother came over with her parents in 1912 during the third wave of the genocide. Originally named Siranous ("Beautiful") Dilkian, she changed her name to Blanche in the new country. She married George Sarkissian in 1917 in Fresno. Noussaper, Siranous' mother, also escaped. She adopted the name Lucy in America and died in Fresno in September 1972 at the age of 94. Like other family members she was buried in Ararat Armenian Cemetery in Fresno.

Johnny Sarkisian went to technical school in Fresno. The Little Armenia section of Fresno was a great magnet for Armenians. It represented the immigrant world portrayed in many of William Saroyan's writings. Today it boasts an Armenian Heritage Museum. Armenians who escaped the Massacre of 1915 joined relatives in communities like Fresno and took low-paying jobs picking fruit or working at canneries. Many never took the trouble to learn English. One census taker thought Cher's grandparents spoke Arabic. Next door were poor Japanese, Italians, Hindus and Mexicans. Armenians were not considered white and eligible for citizenship until a Congressional decree of 1909.¹⁷

Cher has confessed that for much of her life she did not feel strongly connected to her Armenian heritage. That changed when she traveled to

¹⁶ Comment, dated August 5, 2020, "Cher the 'Half Breed,'" blog post dated March 12, 2019: <https://dnaconsultants.com/cher-the-half-breed/>.

¹⁷ Aram Ghoogasian, "How Armenian-Americans Became 'White': A Brief History," Ajam Media Collective, online article at :<https://ajammc.com/2017/08/29/armenian-whiteness-america/>.

Armenia on a humanitarian mission in 1993 while the country was at war with Azerbaijan. In 1985 she had been able to converse with journalist Tom Vartabedian in idiomatic Armenian.

Who Are the Armenians?

If Cherokees somehow intermarried historically with Armenians today they have no memory of it, which is surprising, for Armenian culture is quite distinctive. Armenians are a national group that can hardly be mistaken for any other. The genetic traits of Armenians came together in the Late Bronze Age and their characteristic genes have survived intact with little foreign admixture for three thousand years. No population is pure (that's why percentages are an illusion), but the Armenians come very close. The population isolate we know as Armenian took final shape when their ancient homeland was divided between the Ottoman Turks and the Safavid Empire in Iran about 500 years ago, and it hasn't changed much since then.¹⁸

In the Genocide of 1915, Turkish authorities killed millions of Armenians, leaving only 400,000 out of an estimated 2 million in place on the eve of World War I. The pitiless mass executions caused an explosion of refugees to flee Turkey, among them Cher's father's family. The largest diaspora settlements today are located in Russia, the United States, France, Georgia, Lebanon, Iran, Germany, Syria, Ukraine, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Brazil. There are around five million people with full or partial Armenian ancestry living outside of Armenia. This is more than the number of Armenians who reside in their old homeland. It is a heartland divided today between the Republic of Armenia (formerly part of the USSR), Turkey to the west, Georgia to the north, the de facto independent Republic of Artsakh and Azerbaijan to the east, and Iran and Azerbaijan's exclave of Nakhchivan to the south.

According to historians, the Armenian trade diaspora was even more influential than that of Jews. It was more stable than Jewish economic activity since Armenians had their own native land. As Christians, unlike Jews, emigrant Armenians were not persecuted outside their homeland or communities, and it was easy to do business with other Christians. Armenian trade encompassed both overland and maritime routes. It spanned the world, from China, India and the Indian Ocean to the Americas.¹⁹ The circumstances favoring Armenian merchants were obvious. With the rise of Islam, Armenia became a Christian island in a Muslim ocean. Armenians'

¹⁸ Marc Haber et al, "Genetic Evidence for an Origin of the Armenians from Bronze Age Mixing of Multiple Populations," *European Journal of Human Genetics* 24 (2016), pp. 931-36.

¹⁹ Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984).

isolation underlined the need to deal tactfully and get along with their Muslim neighbors.

At the end of the Turco-Mongol invasions of the fourteenth century, Armenia was partitioned between the Ottoman Turks to the West, who were Sunni, and Safavids in Persia to the East, which was Shi'ite. "With the Turkish seizure of Crimea in 1475, not a few Crimean Armenians were forced to move west as refugees into Moldavia, Transylvania and mainly to Galicia, now in southern Poland. In central Europe, they made contact with other Armenian communities in closer touch with the homeland. They therefore changed their culture once more—back to norms more nearly like those of contemporaneous Armenia. In spite of many vicissitudes, the Polish and other Armenian settlements in central Europe kept their position in the overland caravan trade till they were finally displaced by railroads in the nineteenth century."²⁰ Such a blending of peoples squeezed westward may explain the genetic confusion of Ashkenazi Jews and Armenians first noticed by Eran Elhaik of the University of Lund.²¹ It also may be the reason for matches such as Polish, Ukrainian and Romanian among Cherokee descendants.

The heyday of Armenian trade came in the seventeenth century when the Safavid rulers of Persia established New Julfa, an all-Armenian suburb outside their capital at Isfahan. At New Julfa resided the *kehajas*, an Arabic term of respect for scholars, teachers, writers and very wealthy merchants; it literally means "rich" in the Persian language. Armenians enjoyed a monopoly on the silk trade and supplied the thriving textile industries of Europe on a vast scale through their warehouses at Aleppo and other way-stations. Subsidiary locations, all staffed by family members and fellow Armenians, operated at Paris, London, Antwerp, Amsterdam, Marseilles, Seville, Cadiz, Venice, Florence, Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Oran, Riga and other cities.²² In 1620, there were no fewer than forty Armenian trade houses in Amsterdam alone. New Julfa ships flying the red-yellow-red flag with the Lamb of God ensign sailed all over the world. Commercial republics including Courland and Ragusa were governed by Armenian merchants, often acting in concert with Jews. There may also have been a tie-in with French Protestants and the Templar or Hospitaller Knights of Jerusalem.

Did Armenian merchants reach the American frontier and intermarry with Indians? Particularly with the Cherokees? Or are we looking at ancient

²⁰ Ibid, p. 186.

²¹ Eran Elhaik, "The Missing Link of Jewish European Ancestry: Contrasting the Rhineland and the Khazarian Hypotheses," *Genome Biology and Evolution* 5/1 (January 2013), pp. 61–74.

²² Vahé Baladouni and Margaret Makepeace, *Armenian Merchants of the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries: English East India Company Sources*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society N.S. 88/5 (1998), pp. xx-xxvii.

contributions to the Cherokee identity? It's hard to know the source, extent or duration of Armenian admixture. We can only venture to say that it is not an artifact of genetics or mistake of statistics.

Complications, Complexity and Contradictions

Another customer of ours taken aback by her autosomal results was Marcia Dietrich, whose no. 1 world match was U.S. Cherokee Enrolled (n=33). Her story brings us a little closer to a possible scenario for these admixture events. "Because I grew up in Des Moines and only knew of my German, Dutch and Scottish ancestry, plus that splash of Native American, I never imagined having either Cherokee or Turkish/Armenian," said Dietrich. Yet Armenian was reported as her third strongest megapopulation after Iberian and Jewish, just before American Indian. It was medium high in her European matches, as was Turkish. It was impossible to claim there was no "there" there.

"DNA Consultants' test is not the only one to show Armenia and similar results," Dietrich added. "Family Tree DNA pegs me at 5% Asia Minor, which they define as Turkey and Armenia, while MyHeritage has me at about 2.6% West Asian, with my dad at 2.1%, mapping into Iran and Iraq." Her mother, she adds, was the source of the Native American, but was never tested. Evidently, Dietrich's maternal side was showing both Cherokee and Armenian, either conflating the two or suggesting that Armenian was a contributor to Cherokee DNA.

How many others have this hidden ancestry? Of the 56 mitochondrial profiles generated by Phase III of the Cherokee project, 36 have autosomal profiles, allowing us to cross-check. Of these, 21 show medium to high Armenian results (58%). In several instances, Armenian is no. 1 in the world lineup (N=520) or in their megapopulations (N=22).

Ava Fink (participant 8) has Armenian combined with Jewish as well as with Cherokee. Her mitochondrial line is J2b1 and her specific mutations are the same as one of the ancient female founders of Ashkenazi Jews,²³ a type also found in the wives of Cherokee and Choctaw chiefs in traditional genealogies.²⁴ In a story of secrecy familiar from the stories of other participants, Fink's maternal grandmother concealed the family's Jewish roots, passing that knowledge only to the eldest daughter, whom she

²³ See D. M. Behar et al, "Counting the Founders: the Matrilineal Genetic Ancestry of the Jewish Diaspora," *PLoS One* 3/4 (2008) e2062.

²⁴ One of the first published articles focusing on the phenomenon of Jewish-Native American intermarriage was our "Shalom and Hey, Y'all: Jewish-American Indian Chiefs in the Old South," *Appalachian Quarterly* 7/2 (June 2002), pp. 80-89. See also Elizabeth Caldwell Hirschman and Donald N. Yates, *Jews and Muslims in British Colonial America* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2012), pp. 145-47. Chapter 10, "The Jewish Strain," will investigate several Jewish Cherokee, Choctaw and Creek connections.

instructed to tell no one. The Jewish grandmother's name was Mary Byers Nicholson Hines, born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1896 or 1897. Fink confirmed connections with other Scottish Jews after studying *When Scotland Was Jewish* and *Jews and Muslims in British Colonial America*. She is not sure where the Cherokee enters into her family tree. A Cherokee population is no. 6 in her autosomal report. Armenian matches occur as nos. 18 (Garmon, n=95), 24 (Ararat Valley, n=105), megapopulation 4 and European 14.

Donna Atkins (participant 16), another J, also has high Cherokee and Armenian matches, as does Don Barrington (participant 57). But the poster child for Cherokee-Armenian heritage is surely Julie Burton (3.45), Ava Fink's sister. Burton's autosomal results are similar to Fink's, only more pronounced. She has Native American Minnesota populations in the top three positions, followed by Armenian Ararat Valley and Garmon (11, 45), Turkish (14, 15, 22)²⁵ and Cherokee (24). Armenian is her top megapopulation result, and American Indian is her second-highest. In her European country results, Turkish (n=500) is no. 6 and Armenian (n=404) no. 7. In her sister's European rankings, Turkish was no. 1.

Are haplogroups important for judging autosomal population matches? The leading ones among Phase III participants with high Armenian results are U (6), J (4), T (3) and H (2). This proportion is about the same as in the overall project. The distribution does not seem to correlate with haplogroup frequencies among modern-day Armenians. To judge from GenBank, Armenians emphasize H's (34%) and J's (19%) and have few U's (8%).²⁶ These considerations suggest Armenian admixture is recent, not ancient and embedded, incidental and erratic, not pervasive in nature. It may have occurred in more of a male-mediated flow than in family groups that included females. That way it would be more apparent in the autosomal picture than in mitochondrial surveys.

Melungeon Matches

Armenian also crops up in people with significant Melungeon ancestry. In Donna Barefoot Atkins' results (participant 16), for instance, where Melungeon is the no. 11 world match and no. 1 megapopulation result,

²⁵ B. S. Akbasat et al, "Turkish Population Data With the CODIS Multiplex Short Tandem Repeat Loci," *Forensic Science International* 123/2-3 (2001), pp. 227-29. I. Yavuz et al, "Turkish Population Data for 15 STR Loci by Multiplex PCR," *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 50/3 (2005), pp. 737-38. F. Ascioglu et al, "Allele Distribution on Nine Short Tandem Repeat Loci for Turkish population: D3S1358, vWA, FGA, D8S1179, D21S11, D18S51, D5S818, D13S317, D7S820," *Forensic Science International* 129/1 (2002), pp. 75-77.

²⁶ GenBank: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>.

Armenian is the no. 3 megapopulation. In Mitzy Gann's report (18), where Portuguese is no. 1 (as in Atkins'), and Greek, Turkish and Melungeon occur, Armenian is the fifth-highest megapopulation. A similar mixture is evident in Peter Lyle Atkins, Donna's husband (participant 28), Wendee Lowe (29), Sally Littleton (39), Gary James (42) and Robin "Hughes" Kelly (44). In all these, Jewish matches also figure prominently, and Romani or Gypsy matches are sometimes seen. The inference is that the very diversified Melungeon gene pool merges together all these sub-populations. This was the hypothesis of Yates and Hirschman's *Appalachian Journal* study published in 2010, except that Cherokee and Armenian were not specifically mentioned at the time as key ingredients.²⁷

It stands to reason that Cherokees overlap and cluster genetically with Melungeons: their historical stronghold lay in the Overhill Towns on the Holston and Little Tennessee rivers close by the Watauga country and Newmans Ridge. But was that rather narrow region also the location of a separate Armenian influence? Possibly, as we will see in a later chapter.

Another Cherokee-Armenian connection can be seen in the results of Susan Dawson (6). Dawson is a T1 in mitochondrial lineage, one of the most representative of Old World types among the Cherokee.²⁸ Both Cherokee and Melungeon are prominent in her ancestry. Armenian Lake Van (n=101), however, is her no. 1 world result and Armenian is her no. 1 megapopulation. In statistical terms, Dawson has a chance of 1 in 3 versus 1 in 6 of having Armenian ancestry compared to other European Americans. Although Portugal, Northern Ireland and Scotland occupy the first three ranks in her European population matches, Armenia is next (no. 4).

Among the U's who have Armenian hits are Kristine Dupuis (5, with Cherokee=no. 8), Tonya Battin (25, Jewish=no. 1, Armenian=no.2), Sally Littleton (39, Turkish=no. 1), Gary James (42, with significant Greek) and Marcy Barrington (56, Armenian=Megapopulation no. 1, Armenian Lake Van=no. 1 in world matches).

Enter Central and South American Indians

Autosomal STR allele frequency matching allows us to detect a diversity that is much more telling than uniparental haplogroups. A very unusual pattern of admixture is evident, for instance, in Robert McFarlin's autosomal report (32). There are Central and South American Indian matches

²⁷ Donald N. Yates and Elizabeth C. Hirschman, "Toward a Genetic Profile of Melungeons in Southern Appalachia," *Appalachian Journal* 38/1 (Fall 2010), pp. 92-111.

²⁸ See Donald N. Yates and Teresa A. Yates, *Cherokee DNA Studies: Real People Who Proved the Geneticists Wrong* (Phoenix: Panther's Lodge, 2014), pp. 56, 65-71, 97, 114-19, 220.

(Guatemala Mestizo, Ecuadorian Kichwas, Northeast Mexican Mestizo, Brazilian Amazonian and multiple Colombian populations, 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 18, 19, 21) combined with Iberian, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Romani/Gypsy and Armenian results. Cherokee comes after all the other American Indian populations and is no. 49. McFarlin's top megapopulations are:

- 1 Iberian American
- 2 Middle Eastern
- 3 Armenian
- 4 American Indian
- 5 Iberian
- 6 Northern European
- 7 South Asian
- 8 European American
- 9 Mediterranean European
- 10 Romani

McFarlin's maternal ancestry is H, a type previously reported in the Cherokees, together with J and a handful of other anomalous lineages.²⁹ His ancestry was formally researched in census records in 2016, and the maternal line was traced in unbroken fashion through several generations in North Georgia to Caroline Watson, born in the Carolinas about 1715.³⁰ So here we apparently have a case of mostly Hispanic and American Indian ancestry from what was at one time Spanish and Creek territory, and we mustn't gloss over Armenian and Middle Eastern.

As for South America, we must recall here that James Adair's history of the southeastern tribes included seven tribes on the lower Coosa River in what is now Alabama who were said to come from South America:

I am assured by a gentleman of character, who traded a long time near the late Alebahma garrison, that within six miles of it, live the remains of seven Indian nations, who usually conversed with each other in their own different dialects, though they understood the Muskohge language; but being naturalized, they were bound to observe the laws and customs of the main original body. These reduced, broken tribes, who have helped

²⁹ Theodore G. Schurr, "Mitochondrial DNA and the Peopling of the New World." *American Scientist* 88/3 (2000), pp. 246-53.

³⁰ See Appendix B.I, "McFarlin Ancestors in North Georgia." The mitochondrial specimen was submitted by his sister, Victoria Dian McFarlin..

to multiply the Muskohge to a dangerous degree, have also a fixed oral tradition, that they formerly came from South-America, and, after sundry struggles in defence of liberty, settled their present abode.³¹

As we shall see, there were other connections with South America.

An Apalache Foundation post by Richard Thornton claimed in March 2020 that going from north to south there were the following ethnicities on the South Atlantic Coast: Siouan with some Irish words; Santee – Panoan from Peru; Winyah Bay Estuary – Early Medieval Norse; Charleston Bay – Muskogee-Creek tribal names; Cusabo – Panoan from Peru; Itsate-Creek tribal names; Port Royal Sound – Carib tribes from Venezuela; Uchee Water and Raccoon Clans; Kiawah and Daufuskee Islands – Early Medieval Irish Gaelic; Savannah – Apalachicola from Peru, plus Uchee; Savannah – Yamacora from Cuba; Tybee Island – Itza or Chontal Maya salt traders; Ossabaw Island – Panoan from Peru; Ogeechee River – Duhare and Uchee; Wassaw Island – Polynesian with Maori DNA markers (?); Sunbury Sound – Carib from Venezuela; Canoochee River and Blackbeard Island – Tupi from South America; St. Catherines Island – Taino from Antilles; St. Simons Island – Southern Arawak and Taino; Jekyll Island – Taino from Antilles; Sapelo Island – Tupi from NE South America & Panoans from Peru; Alekmanni – Anglisk from Scandinavia (!); Satilla River – Satile (Panoans) from Peru; Cumberland and St. Mary's Sound – Mocama from Venezuela; NE Florida – Wareo from Venezuela; East Central Florida – Ciboney from Cuba SE; Florida – Tequista – Tequis Caribs from Venezuela; SW Florida – Tequista – Tekesta Caribs from Veracruz.³²

Even in a C lineage, Beth Katehis (62), we have a strange Mediterranean and Native American mixture with a dash of Armenian. Katehis' autosomal profile reveals the familiar combination of Portuguese, Sephardic Jewish, American Indian and Iberian, and Armenian shows up as the no. 4 megapopulation. The conclusion is inescapable. Wherever Cherokee is detected, so is Armenian. The same combination crops up in Creek and Choctaw families. The only questions are how old is the admixture and what is its proximate source and center of diffusion. In the next chapter, we will look at one of the oldest accounts of Southeastern diversity, an English expedition of the seventeenth century.

³¹ *Adair's History of the American Indians*, ed. by Samuel Cole Williams, (Johnson City: Watauga, 1930; originally published London, 1775), p. 285.

³² Richard L. Thornton (Mar. 9, 2020), *The Americas Revealed* [Apalache Foundation], "A Constellation of Peoples Once Lived on the South Atlantic Coast." Online: <https://apalacheresearch.com/2020/03/09/a-constellation-of-peoples-once-lived-on-the-south-atlantic-coast/>.

Matching the King

In 2019, we applied our new forensic data for 60 American Indian tribes to the DNA of Elvis Presley. The autosomal profile we had was extracted from 30-year-old blood believed to come from sheets slept on by the King of Rock 'n' Roll himself. The original lab feat was accomplished by Sorenson Genomics scientists in February 2006. The strange relic had fallen into the hands of Houston private investigator Bobbi Bacha, as described in our book *Old World Roots of the Cherokee*.³³

How did Bacha come by Elvis' sheets? Attending a celebrity auction more than two decades ago, she put in the winning bid. Nearly 20 years old at that time, stained with blood and soiled by semen, but carefully preserved, they were described as coming from the hotel room where Elvis Presley stayed on his Farewell Tour in June 1977. She won't tell us how much she paid but says, "I could have bought a comfortable medium-sized home."

Bacha is of Melungeon descent. "As you know," she told us in a phone interview, "Nevil Wayland is my grandfather, and it was he who first coined the term Melungeon." She continued: "We believe his wife was the daughter of Chief Red Bird as his son was the Scribe to Chief Red Bird. Nevil built the first church in Arkansas after the family told of a great war against the Indians and he took them to Arkansas and built Stoney Creek Church. That's the name of it." And that was the name of the mother church back in Tennessee, which still preserves the first mention of the word Melungeon in minutes from 1813.³⁴

Elvis's family tree is a mare's nest, but he probably had more Native American ancestry than Cher. His maternal lineage goes back at least to Nancy Burdine (b. 1825 in Ky., d. 1860 in Miss.), remembered as a Jewess. She first appears on a census record from 1850 Floyd County, Kentucky. Nancy's mother was allegedly a Cherokee Indian named White Dove, but a birthplace of Kentucky doesn't instill a lot of confidence in this legend. More probably the line went back to Virginia, whether it was Indian or not. There was also supposedly a Cherokee connection through Mourning Dove, or Morning Dove White, who was born about 1800 and married Elvis' 3rd-great-grandfather William A. Manscill/Mansell Sr. about 1816 in Henry County, Tennessee, though this Native American ancestry has been disputed and is generally rejected.³⁵

³³ Donald N. Yates, *Old World Roots of the Cherokee: How DNA, Ancient Alphabets and Religion Explain the Origins of America's Largest Indian Nation* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2012), pp. 42f.

³⁴ See Phyllis E. Starnes and Donald N. Yates, *Ancestors and Enemies: Essays on Melungeons* (Phoenix: Panther's Lodge, 2014), pp. 1-14.

³⁵ See "Morning (White) Mancill (abt. 1798-abt. 1835)" webpage at: <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/White-24135>. We don't dismiss the White ancestry

Elvis's ancestry is far from clear to begin with, but there are numerous American Indian matches in his autosomal results. Additionally, his mitochondrial DNA is haplogroup B, with a strong Maya match—concrete proof of the undeniable presence of Maya-related Indians in the Southern Highlands.

Curiously, Elvis gets a match to Polynesians (#34), a recently added population in the database. Polynesian connections have also been detected in the DNA record of Cherokees and Creeks. We will see at least one instance of a Polynesian haplotype in a Phase III participant with Tongan and Mauri affinity in a later chapter.

We list here the top fifty matches for Elvis's autosomal profile. Note that Cherokee is on the list, but it is Mesoamerican matches that score the highest. Like the results of many others, the general trend is slanted more to the Creek Indians than the Cherokee. (Populations appearing in blue type have special descriptive pages on the DNA Consultants website.)

Rank	World Population Matches
1	Mexico- Huichols ³⁶ - Durango (n=57)
2	Mexico - Nayarit and Jalisco - Cora (n = 64)
3	Russia - Korean (n = 49)
4	Colombian - Boyaca (n = 120)
5	Costa Rican (n = 500)
6	Hispanic - U.S. (n = 210)
7	Polish - Central (n = 430)
8	Costa Rican (n = 260)
9	U.S. Cherokee Admixed (n = 92)
10	Native American - Choles - Chiapas, Mexico (n = 109) ³⁷

out of hand, since the Labon/White family was a prominent Cherokee and Choctaw mixed-blood family during this very period.

³⁶ The Huichols, whose name means "Medicine Men," belong to the large Uto-Aztecan group that dominates the American Southwest and Mexico. Often referred to as a Nation of Shamans, 43% of them have the Crazy Horse Gene. See Dance of the Deer Foundation: <https://www.shamanism.com/huichol>.

³⁷ The Choles or Ch'ols are of Maya stock and comprise one of the most important Indian tribes in Chiapas, a state that has about 13.5% of all of Mexico's indigenous population. They migrated to the northwest of the state starting about 2,000 years ago, when they were concentrated in Guatemala and Honduras. Our reference population represents 109 unrelated Choles from Chiapas State who were sampled in 2004 by universities in Spain. Cristina Sanchez et al, "Genetic Diversity of 15 STRs in Choles From Northeast of Chiapas (Mexico)," *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 6 (2005), pp. 1499-1501.

11	Portuguese - Northern (n = 286)
12	Slovakia – Saris (n = 848)
13	Colombian - Northeastern - Santander (n = 99)
14	Hispanic - Florida (n = 100)
15	U.S. Chippewa Indians (n = 22) ³⁸
16	Guatemalan - Mestizo (n = 200) ³⁹
17	Polish - Northern (n = 202)
18	Hispanic - Arizona (n = 117)
19	White - Marion County, Indiana (n = 170)
20	Colombian - Bogata (n = 150)
21	Native American - Lumbee (n = 106)
22	El Salvadoran (n = 228)
23	Native American - Minnesota (n = 191)
24	Native American - Minnesota (n = 203)
25	Polish - Podlasie (North East) (n = 413)
26	Native American - Minnesota (n = 100)
27	Chinese - Beijing-Han (n = 201)
28	Mexican - Northeastern - Mestizo (n = 143)
29	Mexican - Nuevo Leon (n = 143)
30	Belgian (n = 198)

³⁸ U.S. Chippewa Indians population data are based on blood samples obtained from 22 unrelated individuals living in the Southwestern United States in 2016. J. Ng et al, "Native American Population Data based on the Globalfiler® Autosomal STR Loci," *Forensic Science International: Genetics* 24 (2016), e12-e13, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsigen.2016.06.014>. Chippewa are also called Ojibway and Anishnabe.

³⁹ Guatemala is a Central American republic whose main population identifies as mestizo but which numbers many indigenous Indians among its inhabitants. The territory of modern Guatemala once formed the core of the Maya civilization. According to the 2010 Census conducted by the National Institute of Statistics (INE), about 41.5% of the population is Mestizo (also known as Ladino), reflecting mixed indigenous and European heritage. A similar proportion of Guatemalans (41%) are of full Amerindian ancestry, which is among one of the largest percentages in Latin America, behind only Peru and Bolivia. Most indigenous Guatemalans are of Maya inheritance. Guatemalan Mestizo represents 200 unrelated individuals living in the state of Guatemala who were sampled in 2006 by the Universidad de Granada, Spain. Esther Martinez-Espin. et al, "Guatemala Mestizo Population Data on 15 STR Loci (Identifiler Kit)," *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 51/5 (2006), pp. 1216-8, doi: 10.1111/j.1556-4029.

- 31 Polish (n = 136)
- 32 Mexican - Southern Mexico (Guerrero) Mestizo (n = 251)
- 33 Polish (n = 125)
- 34 New Zealand East Polynesian (n = 20752)
- 35 Poland - Lodz (n = 1000)
- 36 Polish (n = 870)
- 37 Venezuelan - Caracas (n = 255)
- 38 Hispanic - Virginia (n = 183)
- 39 White - Florida (n = 123)
- 40 Asian - U.S. (n = 161)
- 41 Colombian-Andean-Amazonian-Orinoquian (n = 846)
- 42 White - Maine (n = 151)
- 43 Iberian Peninsula - Basque (n = 50)
- 44 Hispanic - U.S. (n = 199)
- 45 Hispanic - Southwestern U.S. (n = 105)
- 46 Chinese Han - Sichuan Province (n = 100)
- 47 Malaysian - Chinese (n = 210)
- 48 Chinese - Western U.S. (n = 98)
- 49 Native American - Michigan (n = 29)⁴⁰
- 50 Portuguese - White (n = 146)

Huichol matches reflect the fact that many of the southeastern U.S. tribes originated in Mexico. Adair mentions that the Chickasaw he lived among in northeast Georgia were still in touch with relatives in Mexico, whom they used to visit. You cannot write the history of any American Indian nation without including Mesoamerica. If we examine Elvis's megapopulations, the No. 1 match is Native American. This is consistent with the Maya match for his matrilineal haplotype, and it highlights the importance of one's direct female line. American Indian is twice as pronounced as European American.

⁴⁰ This reference population represents people identifying or identified as Native American sampled in the state of Michigan. The data set seems to reflect a broad cross-section of mostly urban acculturated members of Eastern U.S. tribes, with Cherokees being the most salient. DNA samples from 29 Native Americans were provided by the Detroit Police Department and the Michigan State Police, with help from the Illinois State Police. Source publication: "CODIS STR Loci Data from 41 Sample Populations," *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 46/3 (2001), pp. 453-89.

Top Megapopulations	Index
American Indian	130.0
Central European	73.6
European American	60.2
Iberian American	56.4
East Asian	49.6
Iberian	46.5
Northern European	43.6

On a map, Elvis' global matches light up almost every indigenous population in United States with the exception of western types. Significantly, he has the Aztlan Gene, a rare marker we will discuss in chapter 6, "Iztacans and Oghuzians." The Aztlan Gene is virtually diagnostic of American Indian ancestry. It does not occur in Europe at all.

As we report elsewhere, the Aztlan Gene has a frequency of .37879 in enrolled Cherokees. In other words, almost 40% of Cherokees carry it. Navajos have a frequency of .739, almost twice as high as Cherokees, while North American Indians as a whole (population 467, n=533) have a frequency of .546. The world average is .29019153. One of the lowest frequencies occurs in Ashkenazi Jews. Only about 18% have it.

In a forensic sense, then, Elvis Presley is more American Indian than anything else. His American Indian affinities run to Mexican and Central American and he also shows some South American Indian. In ranked order, his tribal matches are:

Western Mexican Indians (Huichol, Cora)
 Cherokee
 Maya (Chiapas, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador)
 Chippewa/Ojibway (Minnesota, Michigan)
 Lumbee
 South American Indian (Colombia, Venezuela, Amazonian, Andean)

As for Elvis' European side, his top matches are Croatian, Scots-Irish, Dutch and Portuguese. Central American ruins and South American languages have been identified and brought to light in the Appalachians only in the twenty-first century. But Elvis Presley's diverse South and Central American Indian ancestors clearly were welcoming Croatian, Scots-Irish,

Jewish, French Huguenot and Spanish/Portuguese colonists to the region long before we knew their stories. It is another tale of forgotten diversity.



Diversity in Cherokee Ballplay Team in 1913. The youth in back row, third from right, could be a stand-in for Polyclitus' ideal Libyan Greek athlete (chapters 4, 7), while two of the older men have Polynesian physiognomy with curly hair. The man in back, far right, strikes us as Spanish-looking or Sephardic, while the short player on the extreme left seems to have Irish features. National Anthropological Archives Neg. 47748e.

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