



INTERNATIONAL
STORYTELLING CENTER

Melungeon: The Criminalization of Race Transcript

(Please note: This transcript was created from closed captions and as such may have errors in spelling, grammar, and mechanics.)

12:10:53 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Good afternoon and welcome. My name is Alicestyne Turley, I'm director of the international storytelling center freedom story project

12:10:58 Freedom stories -- international storytelling center initiative underwritten by the national endowment for the humanities.

12:11:05 It is designed to eliminate underappreciated -

12:11:13 aspects of African-American and Appalachian history. It brings together the storytelling

12:11:28 with scholarship with the intent of guiding our viewers into appreciation of the role of African-American stories in the creation of culture that we experience.

12:11:47 Conceived as a regional program, the resources that the project creates will become part of a toolkit along with this recording presentations that will serve as resources for the nation and world.

12:12:05 We are always eager to highlight the diversity of our communities, the complexity of Appalachian histories, and the role the region has played in the United States history all of which has been subject to misunderstanding and stereotypes.

12:12:13 The international storytelling center is fortunate to have these stories because of the financial support of the national endowment for the humanities.

12:12:25 Today's discussion -- along with all freedom story discussions are available on our website.

12:12:46 I encourage our viewing audience if you've questions or today's panelist to text to our Facebook page during our discussion and we will do our best as to it to address as many as we can at this time permits.

12:12:59 We currently plan to be in our 2021 discussion series January 9. The same time, same outlets.

12:13:09 So please check the international storytelling center webpage. We always have the latest information regarding our freedom stories scheduling.

12:13:20 We are pleased to begin today's discussions as we always do the benefit of a storyteller.

12:13:29 We are fortunate to be joined by our nationally recognized author and storyteller, Lyn Ford, who has agreed to share a few of her family stories with us.

12:13:35 Lyn is a fourth-generation storyteller, author and teaching artist.

12:13:43 Her work is -- her Appalachian family heritage and folktales.

12:13:54 Lyn put into printer first two collections of those stories of Appalachian tales.

12:14:00 They were both winners of storytelling awards.

12:14:18 Her work has taken her to schools and conferences, correctional facilities and women's retreats, across the United States and the world including Australia, Ireland and by virtue of the Zoomiverse, Germany, Singapore and South Korea.

12:14:35 Following Lyn's presentation -- we will have a panel but right now let's listen to the presentation.

12:14:45 >>LYN FORD: Thank you. I want to share a story and picture for you first.

12:14:55 That is me. That little round headed child and I think my head is as big now as it was then.

12:15:05 That is my mama, Jean E. Cooper Matthews.

12:15:21 My mother went to school at Howard University and the family was thrilled that she went there and she got a degree in music and came back to her home in the Appalachian region of western Pennsylvania, Mercer County.

12:15:34 And she could not get a job. Not because she done anything wrong and not because her grades were poor because they were top of the class.

12:15:43 But because of who she was. No school would hire her as a music teacher. And they were not dance studios.

12:15:53 She probably would've done better to go to New York City or some big-city but she wanted to stay where family was and she wanted to help the folks that were in that valley.

12:16:08 When she could not get work as a teacher and she could not find much work as a singer with an operatic voice except solos at church,

12:16:09 My mother eventually became a registered nurse and eventually the assistant director

12:16:14 of a community for elders.

12:16:22 And when she retired from there that beautiful voice was gone.

12:16:22 The music was gone.

12:16:36 Her joy was still there, but my mother was not who she might have been just because of what someone else thought she was.

12:16:46 This is a picture of her mama.

12:16:51 My grandma, Jean and it turned out Jean is not really her name.

12:17:03 And so in the family Bible she just crossed that name out and put Elizabeth Jean.

12:17:08 So every firstborn girl in the family had the name "Jean". I'm linett Jean there is Audrey Jean, Sandra Jean.

12:17:17 We are all named Jean and that name is just in the Bible and was in her heart. But that was not her name.

12:17:30 She thought the other name would be an embarrassment. She thought the other name was something folks would not accept because it sounded too country.

12:17:35 My grandma could play the piano and also played saxophone in a jazz band, way back when.

12:17:42 At that piano she played, when the movies had no sound.

12:17:47 No music. Other than what she made playing on the keys on that piano.

12:17:58 But her children could not sit on the first floor where the piano was. They had to sit in the balcony.

12:18:13 And if there were not too many people around who might notice, my mother told me that grandma would let them slink down and sit beside the piano and it was hard to see them moving they were on that first floor and close to their mama.

12:18:25 Still she could not use her music. She could not use her voice and she died of cancer of the throat without becoming the one she might have been.

12:18:31 These are two of my favorites in the family.

12:18:42 You see my pops with the dark hair and my great pops, his father, my great grandfather.

12:18:50 And I always thought great pops looked a bit like Abraham Lincoln with white hair but they were stonemasons.

12:19:04 And they lived in a part of Ohio where they could have worked on the pottery that was being made in the pottery capital East Liverpool, Ohio.

12:19:10 However because of who someone decided they were, they were not permitted to work there.

12:19:16 Pop-ups worked in the coal mines. He was trained as an engineer but they would not let him run the train.

12:19:23 Eventually he worked in the steel mill. He still work on the rails a bit but not in charge of anything.

12:19:38 And great pops, great pops could build a wall so fine that it looked like the beginning of a castle and yet he would never be hired by anyone who would need those skills,

12:19:48 Because he claimed who he was instead of what somebody might think. He had no question about who he was but that kept him from getting some work.

12:19:56 He died of cancer, never being able to run his own business.

12:20:00 Because he didn't have support to start it and that bit about the pottery?

12:20:09 Well, there were folks of Italian heritage could not work in the pottery Mills either. Too close to being Black.

12:20:22 And it turned out to be a good thing because the dust in those pottery Mills got into the throats and the lungs of the men who worked in them.

12:20:31 And they died from diseases and conditions of that dust while the Black folks and the brown folks thrived.

12:20:39 Still folks held them back from who they could have been.

12:20:47 And the last picture, this is a picture of my favorite storyteller, my daddy.

12:21:03 Now he was considered a red bone, red having to do with the color of his skin as well as the color of his hair. And his eyes were a kind of a hazel color.

12:21:03 His mama had the same coloring and so did my sister.

12:21:11 My daddy was a second lieutenant in the Tuskegee airmen's last graduating classes.

12:21:19 Their battle was to integrate the troops. But he had other knowledge besides flying a plane.

12:21:38 He could tell you about the weather and he had certification for that but when he came back that valley in Appalachian Pennsylvania,

12:21:38 He could not get a job as a weatherman on the radio. Now who was going to see him on the radio?

12:21:48 And he had a smooth, radio type of voice that would've worked beautifully. Somewhere between Barry White and Marvin Gaye.

12:21:53 But he could not get a job as a weatherman on the radio.

12:22:00 And he could not get a job flying planes for any airline.

12:22:10 And ended up working in a steel mill and at a gas station to help his mama and to support his family.

12:22:29 He always worked two jobs. But he never became what he might have because it seems like a crime, like a sin to someone that he was who he was.

12:22:33 And he wasn't ashamed of that, not at all. He was very happy being who we was.

12:22:48 He told me, some folks will say who they are but they really don't know.

12:22:48 And some folks know who they are but they really want to say.

12:23:06 I want you to know who you are and to be who you are. Well actually in the story he said the who you is not who you ain't.

12:23:06 And I didn't understand the importance of that, not then, because I was a little girl.

12:23:13 One day I went to school in the new neighborhood where we lived.

12:23:17 We had moved from the flats the low lands up onto the hill.

12:23:27 Now, neighborhoods were slightly integrated, schools were integrated, but I was the only child of any color in my class.

12:23:39 And I was teased about it and I didn't know why and one day a girl called me that word, you know, that name?

12:23:49 And I had no idea what it meant and I didn't know why her friends were snickering.

12:23:56 I was too ignorant to be angry so I went home from school that day as my father was sitting at the table getting something to eat between his two jobs and I just asked him,

12:24:18 Daddy what is a? My father turned three different shades of red declared at me and I could see his jaw clenching and I thought I done something wrong and then he said you. If I don't ever want to hear that word out of your mouth. That is not who you are. And you don't let somebody else give you a name.

12:24:27 That is not who you are. And then he told me a story and the story has a connection to somebody else who is going to be speaking here too.

12:24:36 I didn't know that at the time it was just what I thought was a legend for my daddy something that he made up.

12:24:46 He told me about a boy given the name Josephus. Had he been in West Africa that would not of been his name.

12:24:51 The age of 10 he was sold to a man in the area across the river from Marietta, Ohio.

12:24:57 The man ran a ferry and Josephus was to work for him without pay.

12:25:00 Without respect.

12:25:27 And the ferry would go across that river and Josephus watched how it worked and the man told him no point in looking at what I'm doing because you're not going to be able to do the work you are too stupid to know what to do.

12:25:27 Josephus was 10 years old and five years past my daddy said and Josephus was now a teenager and he said to that man, sir I can make the ferry go.

12:25:43 I bigger and stronger I know what to do I know how to pull it across the water when it's muddy and I can pull it when it needs to be drawn across the river.

12:25:43 I can do the work and the man told him no, you are too stupid to know what to do just do what I tell you to do.

12:25:52 Help folks on and off the ferry and put their backstop for them just to that that's all you can do.

12:26:00 And Josephus put his head down he didn't say anything but my daddy said five years later Josephus was still working for that man.

12:26:13 And he said to him, sir you are getting kind of old and I bigger and stronger now I can make the ferry go all by myself and you can take yourself a rest.

12:26:32 And the man told him no you are too stupid to know what to do you just do what I tell you to do. Help folks get on the ferry and put the bags on and help them off on the other side put the bags down on the other side.

12:26:32 Don't ask me to do anything more because you are too ignorant to do anything else you are too stupid.

12:26:40 My daddy said Josephus was big, strong, looked good indicative not that man Talbot if he did,

12:26:50 He would be punished and others might be punished too. So he just put his head down.

12:26:57 And then my daddy said one day a man came from across the river, went downriver and then came around and back to that place next to the water.

12:27:13 There was Josephus standing next to the ferry and that old ferry man was asleep at the side of the water and that man said Josephus, get on the ferry I will help you to take it across the river so that you can find your freedom.

12:27:18 I can help you with it. You know what to do.

12:27:29 And Josephus said well sir, I don't know about that because CI been told I'm too stupid to know what to do.

12:27:52 But late at night, when it gets a good bit dark, I must get a little bit smarter. Because I helping folks run away across this here part of the river since I was a boy.

12:27:56 And that man ain't caught me yet. So I'm just going to keep on staying here, helping folks to cross the water.

12:28:02 I know who I am even though he calls me stupid. I'm Josephus.

12:28:12 And when I feel like I've done enough, I'll take the ferry over there myself.

12:28:13 And be free.

12:28:23 And my daddy said that is what Josephus did. One morning the ferry man woke up and his theory was on the other side of the Ohio River.

12:28:34 And daddy said now you remember what I told you. And I know I said yes sir because that was what I was supposed to say.

12:28:41 He said you remember that an adjective like stupid is not your name.

12:28:51 And I thought that was one of my daddy's legends something that he had made up and as I got older I remembered it

12:28:57 I thought it was to make me feel good and then I was in Belfry Ohio getting ready to do some storytelling.

12:29:09 And I had taken a break in the library and talk to the librarian and she brought me some of the work of Mr. Henry Robert Burke.

12:29:20 May his name live on. And as I looked at that work, stories of the Underground Railroad, stories of the area, stories of Marietta,

12:29:24 There was the name, Josephus.

12:29:38 And I felt a chill go up my spine and even talking right now I can feel the goosebumps rising all over my body and I know I sat there looking at that name and crying.

12:29:43 Because there was a historical connection to my father's story.

12:29:52 Legend is wonderful. But realities give you a foundation.

12:30:07 A foundation in who you are. A foundation that you can live and carry to others. A foundation that lets you know that your life matters.

12:30:12 And that an adjective, like stupid, is not your name.

12:30:20 I share these stories to honor my family and to honor all of the elders.

12:30:34 That area of southeastern Ohio was a place where many of the Melungeon heritage helped people to escape on the Underground Railroad.

12:30:43 They were an essential part of that because of who they were and how they looked. And nowadays we can honor them.

12:30:49 But ages ago, folks called them something else. Remember who you are.

12:31:00 Look for who you are. Claim who you are and if you have to, give yourself a name.

12:31:05 And that is the end of my stories, thank you.

12:31:16 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Thank you. I understand we have some audio issues. Can everyone hear me now?

12:31:25 You can't hear me?

12:31:33 >>LYN FORD: You are still very very fuzzy like there is an echo. I'm not quite sure how describe it it's raspy. Alicestyne and not sure what's going on.

12:31:40 >>LYN FORD: Was mine the same way?

12:31:51 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: No. It says let's try leaving and coming back. Okay.

12:32:04 I'm going to sign off & back on.

12:32:23 >>LYN FORD: Somebody is asking me to tell a quick story.

12:32:33 Maybe I can tell a very quick what about two buzzards sitting on a fence and they were sitting there

12:32:33 Waiting for something to die.

12:32:44 See there was this little rabbit knocked out in the middle of a dusty road the heat had gotten to him and he had passed out and the buzzards were waiting for it to be ready to eat

12:32:52 It was still alive and that was not ready to eat when all of a sudden I saw an eagle flying up ahead.

12:33:01 The eagle was soaring around and around and then the eagle flew down and sat beside them and said why are you waiting for something to eat?

12:33:08 Why don't you be like me, rise and fly into the sky.

12:33:08 And seek your food.

12:33:15 And one buzzard looked at the other buzzard and said no. Best be who you is.

12:33:28 You ain't a eagle. You a buzzard.

12:33:35 Well so many bad things have been said about the buzzard that the buzzard thought it may not be bad to be an eagle and so when the eagle rose and flew the buzzard flew too flapping his wings trying his best to look like an eagle.

12:33:48 He circled around the way the eagle did then the eagle flew to the West to get something to eat and that buzzard flew down toward that rabbit he was going to capture or like an eagle and kept on flapping and flying and down he went until Bam

12:34:01 He hit that road and not himself dead. That scared the the rabbit jumped up and ran and lived another day.

12:34:03 The buzzard sitting on the fence that did him and said I told you.

12:34:07 You ain't an eagle. You a buzzard.

12:34:19 Ain't nothing wrong with that. Best be who you is. And since you ain't anymore, your name is now lunch.

12:34:25 And that is the end of that story.

12:34:35 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: All right, thank you Lyn. Hopefully every buddy can hear me now.

12:34:35 >>LYN FORD: That is so much better yes yes.

12:34:46 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Thank you I'm so sorry to our audience but this is part of being in Zoom we never know and hope they were buddy for those wonderful stories from our storyteller.

12:34:49 Thank you so much Lyn I've enjoyed those. I've written a couple of those down to use.

12:35:03 Now I'm pleased introduce the other members of our discussion today beginning with the assistant director of diversity and inclusion at Marietta College, Director Tony Mayle.

12:35:16 Tony was born and raised as part of a Morgan County Ohio Melungeon community which has existed in Morgan County several generations.

12:35:22 He is a first generation high school graduate and currently finishing his doctorate in counselor education from Ohio University.

12:35:40 Tony is involved in genealogy as a means of aiding people and finding themselves, using the wisdom of the elders.

12:35:40 He is the proud father of two beautiful teenage girls who love discussing their family history.

12:35:44 Over the years, Tony has remained active in the Morgan County history.

12:35:56 Including preservation of the work of someone you heard Lyn just mentioned, Henry Burke, I had the pleasure of meeting Henry when he was cranking out the work on the Underground Railroad there

12:36:17 In Morgan County and southern Ohio was so appreciative of everything he has done and so glad the multicultural heritage multicultural genealogical center in Chesterfield is preserving and continuing to promote his work. Nencki for joining us today, Tony.

12:36:27 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: Thanks for having me.

12:36:41 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Let me introduce Wayne and then I will open it up to the panel. Our next panel member we are also fortunate to have author, director of East Tennessee University PBS public radio WETS FM 89.5 on the dial. Joining today's discussion.

12:36:51 Wayne Winkler is not only the director of East Tennessee public radio he's author also an author of two very popular books pick

12:36:59 His book is first beyond the sunset the Melungeon outdoor drama 1969-1976.

12:37:10 And the newly released walking toward the sunset. Both books are published by Mercer University press.

12:37:29 And of Melungeon heritage Wayne is can it committed to the continued exploration and sharing of the Melungeon legacy in East Tennessee. So welcome Wayne and thank you for joining today's conversation.

12:37:29 >>WAYNE WINKLER: Thank you very much.

12:37:34 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: I would like to begin the discussion today by just may be going with you now Tony, keeping everyone can stay unmuted for this.

12:37:49 Tony, can you begin by telling us how you are introduced to this topic of Melungeon history?

12:37:49 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: It's an interesting question because I identify as Melungeon.

12:37:55 Melungeon and again when I tell you these family stories and my perspective keep in mind it is my perspective alone.

12:38:09 We have many surnames in the area I could give you a list I could show you a list. These are surnames in Ohio and West Virginia, Kentucky, Michigan that all identify as Melungeon.

12:38:24 So the term Melungeon is quite complex and as you seen in the PowerPoint earlier the term referred to as not only Melungeon, I have a whole list of names

12:38:29 Because we are unique. Skin tone, hair texture, facial features so on and so forth.

12:38:47 One that always stood by me not only Melungeon but the term Wins -- W stands for white, I into Native Americans and N for negro.

12:38:59 Different identities and you can identify and investigate that further by looking at the tri-racial identity model and because a different family members identify.

12:39:16 So yeah so I've always been Melungeon. Even though I'm light complexion I've always had that identified myself as a Blackmail but I've close family member to identify the native heritage that we have which is Cherokee and Delaware.

12:39:24 So I'm a firm believer in understanding and you see around me you will see on my shirt you will see

12:39:32 The West African spiritual symbol. The bird body is facing forward and the head is facing backwards.

12:39:40 In order gical forward yet you know where you've been reach back into grab.

12:39:49 The bird also has an egg in its mouth not just symbolizing dinner or lunch it's also symbolizing life and youth, our children also have to know our ancestry and history.

12:39:57 I want to tell you one quote by John Henry Clark a Black historian.

12:40:09 About 1960s and 70s so his quote on history, history is a cloth people used to tell the political cultural time of day. It is also a compass the people used to find themselves on a map of human geography.

12:40:15 History tells people where they have been, and what they've been. Where they are and what they are.

12:40:31 Most important, history tells the people where they still must go, what they still must be. The relationship of history to the people, the same as the relationship of a mother to her child.

12:40:36 So history is really important.

12:40:42 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Yes and we hope to get into much deeper discussion of that history but Wayne, share with our viewers how you were introduced to this topic of Melungeon.

12:40:55 >>WAYNE WINKLER: My parents were part of the great Appalachian diaspora of the 1950s they moved up to the industrial Midwest and took jobs building cars.

12:41:04 We kept coming back to Tennessee though, four, five times a year anytime school was out we would come back to them Hancock County where my grandmother lived.

12:41:17 In the summer of 1968 I was reading the local newspaper and we were talking about the proposed outdoor drama that was going to be staged the following year in Sneedville the county seat.

12:41:28 It was going to be about the Melungeons. I was 12 years old thought I had a fairly decent bouquet but never heard the word Melungeon before so I asked my relatives who are these Melungeons?

12:41:38 Why haven't I seen them? And some of the relatives were not really eager to talk about it but some of my relatives were involved in the outdoor drama and planning of it.

12:41:45 They were eager to talk about it that I found out that my dad's family had Melungeon ancestry.

12:41:52 So I thought that is a great thing but I believe it was that same summer I heard my grandmother

12:42:05 Identify, described by a couple of very very nasty terms.

12:42:05 And that brought it to a different level. You will understand now

12:42:20 Why people did not want to talk but it why there was a bad feeling about it because they were people who had a very bad opinion about who the Melungeons were.

12:42:20 I realized the subject was a touchy one. A lot of people were likely relatives I had that did not want to talk about it.

12:42:32 In 1947 the Saturday evening Post did an article about the Melungeons in Hancock County and nobody was happy but it

12:42:35 Now the Melungeons not the non-Melungeons they always felt they been portrayed badly.

12:42:55 So I got curious by -- came home I went to the library and looked up what little available material there was spirit. I read about the work of William Gilbert, Edward Price, the basic library of information available at that time.

12:43:09 And I would write papers at school about it whenever I had the opportunity and those papers always got an A picture. Of that was a novel experience for math but that is the kind of positive reinforcement that makes you a Melungeon researcher.

12:43:21 I put the subject down until I wound up moving to Tennessee for work and found I'm in the same area as many of my relatives were still alive then.

12:43:26 This was an area where people knew about the Melungeons. That heard of the maybe didn't know much about them.

12:43:35 And in 1994 the book the Melungeons the resurrection of a property was published.

12:43:38 That coincided with the rise of the Internet in the hands of ordinary people and

12:43:51 that led to a great deal of interest in the Melungeons. I covered the first Melungeon union for National Public Radio and did a story on them and wound up becoming part of the Melungeon heritage association.

12:44:02 I was able to write a couple books about it and I found it just became something that I was very much involved in.

12:44:10 I want to mention that Brett Kennedy passed away nearly 2 months ago. He had been a victim of a stroke back in 2005.

12:44:24 It had not been very active in public but he was still always a wonderful man and I want to thank him and recognize his work towards making the Melungeons well known around the world.

12:44:41 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Awesome. That is Brent Kennedy's book whenever someone does mention the Melungeons his name is usually the first name you hear when referencing the Melungeons.

12:44:41 I'm sure that both did a great deal improving our knowledgebase.

12:44:47 But I'm also curious about the name --

12:44:58 Her name comes up quite a bit on this topic and I found out even a lot of the writers that are Melungeon always referred back to her.

12:45:01 So Wayne was this a name you are familiar with?

12:45:15 >>WAYNE WINKLER: Yes -- she was a writer and a poet and she as you had mentioned in the PowerPoint she was qualified to be a lawyer not allowed to practice.

12:45:26 She had heard about the Melungeons and in 1890 she made the trip to Hancock County which which was a very remote place for her to go but she went there instead with the various

12:45:34 Families up and down the valley near Newman's ridge and then she wrote articles about them first for the national Sunday American and then

12:45:40 She redid those articles for a national magazine the arena.

12:45:47 And she was very very negative in her portrayal of the Melungeons page

12:45:56 She described them as shiftless, suspicious, just about every bad adjective you could think of she applied to the Melungeons.

12:46:06 And the people in Hancock County really resented what she had written about them. They referred to as dam for

12:46:18 damn fool -- Edward bitter about what she wrote because her writing was the basis about what nearly everybody else wrote for nearly 100 years.

12:46:24 I'm definitely

12:46:38 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: She is on my reading list now because I'm curious about how many of her ideals still reflect in today's society when you talk about tri-racial or multiracial people.

12:46:38 These images have a way of hanging on throughout history which we've learned.

12:46:43 And Lyn in your storytelling about your dad being a Redbone,

12:46:54 My mom was called a red bone and honestly I never understood the term until I began reading for this particular event.

12:47:08 And just for my own history and learning that her family were considered Redbone, I thought that was a reference to their skin color and hair color and

12:47:14 So that is a whole new realm of information for me to explore in terms of Melungeon culture.

12:47:30 But how, and your family, do you celebrate Melungeon history? As a group?

12:47:30 Is this something you're going to write about going forward?

12:47:41 >>LYN FORD: I would like to write about it going forward that the reality in my family however, is that there were -- they once were willing to be who they were and the ones who passed and disappeared from the family.

12:47:50 In fact a portion of the family went to the British Isles the hopes that none of their children would marry a person of color

12:48:01 And the grandchild be a child of color. And my aunt was the one who told me that and she was very angry about it.

12:48:17 She was actually working at a large department store in downtown Sharon Pennsylvania as a hat model.

12:48:17 Had they known she was Black should not of gotten that job and she said as long as I don't ask, I don't tell.

12:48:26 So there is a whole lot of history that I'm trying to gather. And the Melungeon aspect of it probably will be more for my father who has very little family left.

12:48:36 Because he was the one who spoke of the Cherokee and Chickasaw and Choctaw parts of the family.

12:48:49 And he was the one who told me there was this very small community, probably not there anymore, where the tracks went down the middle of the community.

12:48:58 And on one side, the folks were Black and on the other side the folks were white and they were all kinfolk.

12:48:58 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Right.

12:48:59 >>LYN FORD: Stop trying to gather information.

12:49:09 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: After this is over you and I will have to compare notes. I have a branch my mother's side of the family from Pennsylvania who no longer identify as African-Americans.

12:49:24 I want to out them on this program but they have lived a long time in Erie, Pennsylvania, they have passed a long time as Whitesburg

12:49:28 For a time they were considered Italian for the past now totally as white and they no longer be the affiliate with our side of the family. So

12:49:39 You are right even within your own family connections tellings history is not always popular.

12:49:42 But Tony, you are right there now you are still connected to this story.

12:49:56 And how do you think not knowing, talk a lot about not knowing who you are. How would be different in Appalachia.

12:50:10 If we approached history differently? For instance let me share what I'm talking about.

12:50:14 When I was in school it may not have been this way for you but American history always began with British.

12:50:31 British history. So I'm wondering if we would have been as confused about Melungeons if we had begun with Spanish exploration to better explain how we would begin in Appalachia with a tri-racial group.

12:50:37 Because when you know the history it makes sense, right?

12:50:37 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: Yeah of course if you look back at the school system a lot of history was left out.

12:50:55 I remember one time studying Ohio history, the Underground Railroad was not discussed in that class as well and Ohio has a very rich history related to the underground railroad as well as Southeast Ohio.

12:51:07 What you will find in many Melungeons were able to participate. They were light complected and they had roots they had family in Ohio and they had trust.

12:51:08 They were now I'm not saying it was not dangerous because it was dangerous work for them.

12:51:14 They could still be lynched.

12:51:14 But they were able to assist.

12:51:20 You have the Lets Family, the Burke family

12:51:33 In Chester Hill with the Quakers but you will find a lot of former slaves stayed here and they made connection with the natives in the area.

12:51:36 It would've been much different I would say more respect or understanding than taboo.

12:51:48 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Right and this idea of am not convinced that our ideas about Appalachia and how they have formed over the century

12:51:48 Is based on misrepresented history.

12:52:04 So again we see the danger of not telling a full story just telling one story you missed a great deal of American history that really brings us to a better understanding I think

12:52:04 Of where we find ourselves today.

12:52:21 So what other implications do you think this story has? For our moving forward in race relations? Even within our own families if we are still struggling to be able to share this story,

12:52:28 What do you think the implication is for the region for having this type of discussion? Wayne I will start with you.

12:52:39 >>WAYNE WINKLER: The history of the Melungeons is part of what actually happened in Appalachia.

12:52:44 And should be left out of that history leaves everyone with an incomplete picture.

12:52:56 The struggles of the Melungeons in Appalachia and elsewhere it kind of has parallels with what some things that we have going on today.

12:53:07 And you realize some struggles never really end. A couple of examples. In 1845 in the congressional election in the first district of Tennessee,

12:53:15 eight men with luncheon surnames were charged with illegal voting by reason of color.

12:53:28 Some of these men had been in in Tennessee 40 years more but the original Tennessee Constitution granted all free men the right to vote.

12:53:30 The revised Constitution restricted the vote to white men so these men were put on trial.

12:53:40 Some were some pled guilty and paid a fine others were accreted but no one else with Melungeon surnames try to vote again until after the Civil War.

12:53:56 Another issue came up in 1924 the racial integrity act in Virginia. Of course Hancock County is up next to the Virginia state line

12:53:59 So this affected many Melungeon families. The Virginia law classified all citizens is either white or colored nothing in between nothing else.

12:54:11 So he Virginia law was seen as a model for many other states. This was during the eugenics era.

12:54:11 Virginia's law was seen as a model.

12:54:24 The state to find who you were and what rights you had and that included which schools you could go to, what public transportation and accommodations you had right to print

12:54:33 Who you could marry. The racial integrity act by the way was not overturned until 1967 with the Supreme Court case of loving versus Virginia.

12:54:42 Two of the biggest issues we see in the United States today are voter suppression and the government -- extreme with the people of color. This is been going on a long time.

12:54:46 One thing that Melungeon history demonstrates.

12:55:01 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: And certainly what is history the more things change the more they stay the same so we are still struggling with this idea of race in America.

12:55:04 And the fact that so much of it began in the Appalachian region.

12:55:15 For me looking at this early American history and understand that America has always had multiracial groups who were trying to find freedom anyway they could.

12:55:19 How they spread out through the region so

12:55:24 Tony, in southern Ohio, are there other Melungeon communities?

12:55:39 We talked about Morgan County.

12:55:39 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: What you will find is they still segregate.

12:55:39 Of course the segregation at the beginning was not self segregation they were forced by systematic racism.

12:55:44 But even to this day they still self segregate.

12:55:49 The Let family still has land in the original settlement.

12:55:53 In Chester Hill African-Americans still live there.

12:56:03 So even I didn't discuss Guilford but that was once called Taylor town so the story goes that Michael -- or his father owned slaves.

12:56:07 In West Virginia it would've been Virginia at the time.

12:56:21 Microfilm love with a father's slave by the name of Hannah and they had a secret relationship for years and had children

12:56:31 He got tired of his family being in bondage so he went to Ohio County West Virginia, freed his family and moved to Athens County and established a nice community.

12:56:36 That region you will still have descendents of Michael and Hannah who still live in that region today.

12:56:45 So we still self segregate. When I hear, I work within higher education and when I hear Blacks in higher education at moved to this region the inner city,

12:56:57 One of their responses is I don't see any Blacks around me and we are here. We either don't look like you we are hidden.

12:57:02 We self segregate because unfortunately racism still exists even in the community that we've been in for many many generations.

12:57:13 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Well, and I'm learning more and more about history in Eastern Kentucky, Eastern Tennessee, Western North Carolina which seems to have been

12:57:20 sort of the bedrock of these early Melungeon communities and the fact that

12:57:24 we would have, today,

12:57:30 this history still being uncovered. So where we are in terms of our history

12:57:45 and our background, let's talk about the free state of Franklin which we featured in our opening, which I think many people today probably don't even understand be free state of Franklin.

12:57:52 But after looking at this history I cannot help but think maybe one reason they wanted to be the free state was because

12:57:55 of the Melungeon mix.

12:58:05 What are your views on that? I have no evidence of it because I've never researched this area but I think it is an area that needs to be looked into.

12:58:12 Was this a goal of the free state to be able to be there as a tri-racial mix of people?

12:58:22 >>WAYNE WINKLER: I kind of have my doubts that the people were pushing for the state of Franklin really cared too much about the Melungeons.

12:58:31 They surely did not care about the Native Americans who lived here because one of the big purposes behind the state of Franklin to begin with was to take advantage of

12:58:41 The fact that they were no longer found by the British bound by the British treaties that restricted migration west of the Appalachian Mountains.

12:58:49 They were looking to establish themselves in this first stage West on the mountains.

12:58:54 I think they did not intend to share this with the people who were already here

12:59:00 and I don't really think that they had planned on making it any sort of a haven for

12:59:04 for mixed ethnic people.

12:59:11 But as it is, the state of Franklin failed but when the state of Tennessee was created,

12:59:19 their Constitution did give the vote to all free men unfortunately not women but all free men have the right to vote.

12:59:28 There had to been some sort of a positive feeling going on. I don't know who they thought they were going to be talking about but they certainly did

12:59:37 make that available and as soon as they revised the Constitution in 1836 they closed that.

12:59:42 But in the beginning, the bid had that there and I don't think it was an accident.

12:59:57 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: I'm wondering because this was also a large Quaker area and Quakers had begun from the very beginning of freeing slaves, many of them remaining in that Piedmont North Carolina area.

13:00:05 Not willing to move further west so the Quakers including one of those very popular Jonesboro families

13:00:25 who became part of this idea of creating a safe haven for the free African-Americans who were in the region who you've heard both Lyn and Tony mention as operators on the Underground Railroad.

13:00:29 So until 1834, free Blacks in East Tennessee could vote.

13:00:47 Which as you mentioned they had that right stripped away but there he early on there seems to been some effort, and I think Quakers had a lot to do with that,

13:00:47 Some effort to include African-Americans as members of the voting public.

13:00:56 And the same thing in I think in West Virginia they may have also had some freedoms of voting.

13:01:01 And in Kentucky further west they had the right and had taken away about the same time.

13:01:10 So this idea of creating an identity that became white over time at why it was not popular

13:01:18 Two this tri-racial mix.

13:01:23 So as we go and talk about the culture if someone wanted to visit or learn more about the Melungeon culture,

13:01:27 in East Tennessee or southern Ohio,

13:01:33 what do you recommend to them? How would you recommend people get more into this story?

13:01:41 >>LYN FORD: They are not going to find routinely at a library.

13:01:57 I think accessing the information that Tony and Wayne have to offer as well as going into regional libraries researchers where you might find something that makes a difference in your knowledge base.

13:02:06 When I was trying to research some of my dad's stories knowing now that they had some connection to history,

13:02:12 Even here in Columbus, Ohio, the main libraries don't have that much information.

13:02:19 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Is that also your experience Tony? Just limited resources?

13:02:32 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: It is and I have a stack of articles as well as books. So I've collected an amount of literature.

13:02:48 But there are organizations such as the multicultural center in Chester Hill, a Quaker settlement, connected to the Underground Railroad. You have historical society that has a wing of their library dedicated to the history of the late Henry Burke.

13:02:59 You have Marietta College who has a great amount of literature connected to the Underground Railroad and people of color in that area.

13:03:06 The Harris family so you have a lot. But it is one thing where you have a lot of doors but you have to find those keys

13:03:12 People who have those keys to unlock the doors for you. That is always been that way.

13:03:23 Another source would be the Wilbert Siebert index. And OSU history professor early 1900s who wanted to

13:03:35 Grasp the history of the Underground Railroad so we had a students work on a project to try to interview the remaining descendents or those who participated in the Underground Railroad.

13:03:50 He had a vast collection of interviews and not just Ohio but Pennsylvania, Tennessee. On the way to New York and Indiana.

13:03:51 It is a great resource to happen only two from my experience only two libraries in Ohio have that

13:03:56 The Ohio historical Society at Ohio University in Athens have that on microfilm to research.

13:04:15 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: And for those places you have to make an appointment to get to those resources and today with COVID probably not a good time to begin. But they do have the research guides online.

13:04:19 If people are interested and Wayne you've actually written on this. So share with our viewers how you went about collecting information for your two books.

13:04:36 >>WAYNE WINKLER: There are no central places to find the information.

13:04:36 You can find it scattered all about but I did find that going to Hancock County there are a couple place there the Hancock County historical Society

13:04:41 Which than the old jail in Sneedville had a lot of interesting things.

13:04:54 And the community historical Society which is on the north side of Newman's Ridge just about 8 miles away from -- Sneedville.

13:05:12 There is a museum there that commemorates the old Presbyterian mission, the church and the school they had there providing educational opportunity for Melungeons at the time when they were not permitted to go to public schools.

13:05:26 There is a lot of information to be had there ticket really kind of adds a layer to your knowledge that you find elsewhere when you can go to that source and find things that are a bit closer to home.

13:05:29 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: I would encourage talk to your family.

13:05:34 Talk to your ancestor.

13:05:43 I want to end with this but there is an African proverb that says when Elder dies a library burns to the ground.

13:05:55 We live in a time where technology is so mass and we could do many things like now recording it so take advantage of those opportunities to interview your grandmother even your mother and father and discuss things.

13:06:06 Go to family reunions when COVID ends. Take advantage of these opportunities because what you all, what I found researching my mass amount of family the --

13:06:17 I could go on and on the Normans, and every family has a story of when they became mixed so to speak.

13:06:24 Advocate time I'll share some but we all have that story and the stories that's what's so great about Appalachia.

13:06:38 I'm not just talk about Melungeons are people of color in Appalachia. The same goes for the European whites in Appalachia.

13:06:38 It's a storytelling region, don't let those stories die. Past the mom.

13:06:52 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Thank you you're going to say what I was going to say this is the aspect of our history has been unexplored which is kind of the purpose of this project.

13:06:57 And hopefully to encourage people to talk to family members because if we don't record this history in the region,

13:07:12 It is gone. I so regret not having this information to interview my mom and learn more about her mother who was a Choctaw.

13:07:14 And where this term red bone comes from.

13:07:18 I feel so crazy now I don't have that opportunity anymore.

13:07:26 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: And the story needs to be told by us. Not by someone else.

13:07:43 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Based on what I hear everyone saying I think you are the only ones you can tell it because there are no other resources out there.

13:07:43 Probably Wayne has made a wonderful contribution to getting people started.

13:07:55 But you which you just interview you are talking about Tennessee, Kentucky and Ohio but what about Alabama and Georgia and North Carolina where

13:07:59 Where you have these Melungeon settlements? How much of that history don't we have?

13:08:11 And because we don't talk about Cherokee history at all at least they did not when I was in school, there's probably lots of information contained within the Cherokee nation that we need to know more about.

13:08:14 >>LYN FORD: Absolutely.

13:08:21 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: I'm going to look in our chat to see what questions people are sending to us and to begin with

13:08:33 a question and I've open this up to whoever feels comfortable answering this. Ancestry DNA tests show Melungeon so if you had a DNA test,

13:08:37 is there a Melungeon category?

13:08:53 >>WAYNE WINKLER: There is not. It could tell you various components of what people might think is the genetic background of Melungeons but company is going to tell you that you have Melungeon ancestry.

13:09:05 They don't really know what the components might be what that would look like. I've had several people back before DNA tests were commercially available,

13:09:13 I had several researchers asking for DNA samples and I gave Sepp several and heard back from a couple.

13:09:23 It is a confusing lot of information you get from some of the DNA tests.

13:09:24 It tells you what it tells you and does not tell you what it cannot tell you.

13:09:36 I think it is useful in putting together family trees. It's not going to be the answer all your questions.

13:09:36 But maybe some of them.

13:09:36 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: I wanted to give my opinion with this.

13:09:44 When my family members ask should they get DNA testing my answers always no.

13:09:47 And I'll tell you the reason why.

13:09:58 At Ohio University I met the geneticist who came to speak. Henry Louis Gates a family member of the males by the way.

13:10:11 Oprah Winfrey and Henry Louis Gates connecting their DNA ancestry to the continent of Africa.

13:10:15 We had a discussion afterwards I discussed mixed race people and he has confided in me and told me that DNA

13:10:31 is not absolute because you will find even in these locations that's put you in, people migrated for centuries.

13:10:31 So it's not going to give you a specific location and to me that waters down the whole aspect of storytelling

13:10:38 , of oral history in my opinion. My opinion only, I would be more to

13:10:44 depend on oral history than DNA test.

13:10:49 >>LYN FORD: I agree totally. Totally because those stories have been passed down for generations.

13:11:05 And there is some truth behind them as I said I'm thinking of a story is a legend and here there is reality that actually traces to someone in Tony's family gathering the stories too.

13:11:10 I father never said where he heard it but it stuck with me I think that is more important than the DNA testing.

13:11:21 For some health reasons my sister and I had DNA tests done and I was hoping that I would get back to Africa.

13:11:27 But it didn't happen according to the percentages I predominantly Native American.

13:11:34 Well my sister, taking the test at the same time, taking her own unique test,

13:11:46 the boat seemed to go back to the British Isles for her so I don't think those are necessarily reliable sources for the stories that we want as the foundation for our families.

13:12:00 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Lyn you make a good point because I think the other aspect of DNA testing that is not not always shared that you could be from the same family and your DNA percentages can be entirely different.

13:12:10 And so even though you are blood related, what percentage of your parents DNA you actually get could tell a different story for each person.

13:12:15 Which, maybe as time goes on it might get better but for right now,

13:12:23 it is an inaccurate marker for many people. Also I think it's important based on how the story has been told,

13:12:38 you have to understand that the Spanish when they were exploring, they had quite a few African-American sailors and colonization who were part of it.

13:12:45 And a lot of those early Spanish settlers were from East Africa, from Portugal, they had those blood mixes too.

13:12:50 So you don't quite get a central Africa story.

13:12:57 They would've been considered mixed race even in that time period. They would've been mixed race.

13:13:05 I have another question saying my European ancestries hail from -- North Carolina.

13:13:20 A land early settlers stole from natives for its natural salt deposits. I'm having trouble finding the mixing of Blacks and natives in East Tennessee and Western North Carolina. Where can they go for help?

13:13:24 >>LYN FORD: For the story of it?

13:13:33 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Trying to find the history of it. That is one question I think your local heritage society.

13:13:38 Who do history of your region would be a good place to start.

13:13:49 I don't have I don't know much about the Western, North Carolina heritage societies but I have to believe there are some that do exist.

13:13:54 Does anyone Wayne do you have any information that?

13:14:05 >>WAYNE WINKLER: Not really I would suggest to add to the sources you related I would say churches

13:14:08 Particularly Black churches that have been around a while. They may have some history that they can pass on as well.

13:14:19 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Okay. Another viewer wants to know if any of our panelists have heard about the Plecker letters and their impact on the Melungeon community.

13:14:40 >>WAYNE WINKLER: Yes Dr. Walter Plecker was the register of my old statistics in Virginia during the time of the racial integrity act in fact he was one of the people who pushed her to get the racial integrity act passed and at one point he was

13:14:52 Sending he sent a letter to -- at the Tennessee state library and was asking for information about the Melungeons.

13:15:08 He wanted to make sure that he was not missing anyone when he sent out letters to all of the County clerks in Virginia telling them look for people with these surnames.

13:15:14 They are colored passing as white or attempting to pass as white we are going to make sure that does not happen.

13:15:17 He sent these letters he sent a letter to the state library in Tennessee

13:15:26 asking about people of these surnames that were associated with Melungeons.

13:15:33 You could tell that she was kind of reluctant to answer but she did.

13:15:37 And told him what she could about the Melungeons and what she told him was enough for him.

13:15:47 He basically said yes we are going to categorize all these people who have these surnames as colored.

13:15:53 So people would go to the courthouse and apply for a marriage license in the County Clerk was supposed to say no not you you could not marry this person.

13:16:04 That is how it affected people in the real world.

13:16:06 But the letters that he wrote, there would be two different ones the one she wrote that correspondence

13:16:13 he had with the Tennessee librarian and the letter she sent out to the County clerks in Virginia.

13:16:17 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Wow. That sounds like pretty serious work.

13:16:26 >>WAYNE WINKLER: That list of names has been one of the clues that people look at if any of the their family surnames are on that list and that gives them an idea

13:16:32 of what the status of their relatives might have been.

13:16:41 It is a clue it's not an answer necessarily but it gives people a clue.

13:16:47 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: And where are these letters? Are they in, how do people gain access to them?

13:16:57 >>WAYNE WINKLER: You can look them up online you will find them online easily. Just put Walter Plecker and you should find everything I just referred to.

13:17:13 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Tony, the next question has to do with you, the viewer wants to know do you have that list or description paper documents that you held up with the names?

13:17:13 How you people gain access to that? If they wanted to see your list?

13:17:48 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: Do you mind if I put it up now? Quickly? I consented to them as well. But this is that I will do it quickly. This is some of the names and you see this happened with the project with Ohio University.

13:17:48 It was called the African-American presence in the Ohio River Valley and the goal was to connect the land in Wayne national Forest to people of color.

13:17:48 A lot of people of color own land in that area and of course it was taken away over the years.

13:17:55 So is either connections we made and you can see some names are quite familiar.

13:18:03 If you look at the Mayle name we have many different spellings and that had a lot to do with identifying as another race by changing the name.

13:18:09 And I will stop here but if you just send me a message

13:18:14 I will get you the list.

13:18:35 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: We will make, Tony, you are open to it we can provide a list that list in our toolkit so people want to have access to it and I will say this to anyone else on the panel, if you have things you would like for us to share within our toolkit we are more than happy to do it.

13:18:45 I have a PhD student who has a concentration on multiracial people in Western North Carolina, Tennessee and Ohio and they are

13:18:56 saying I have found DNA in marriage links between a group of Western North Carolina families and families in Hancock County Ohio.

13:19:07 I've also some evidence of Melungeon floaters men that moved from community to community. Have anything found any information that may have been linked to these early settlements?

13:19:19 So Hancock County definitely you do, Wayne, but what about Vinton County Ohio?

13:19:32 >>WAYNE WINKLER: Those were places where luncheon families may have migrated to in the 1800s maybe the late 1800s.

13:19:42 They were more to more families coming in all the time and of course there is not enough tillable land for everyone so people may stay a while and move on looking for other places.

13:19:51 There was always a lot of traffic back and forth. People moved back to an area where they had lived earlier.

13:19:56 So you find a trail immigration trail.

13:20:07 Jack Goins of Rogersville has done a magnificent job tracing individual families from Virginia and North Carolina into Tennessee and that trail

13:20:15 Leads many many families out of Tennessee into Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan, all different places.

13:20:24 Jack Goins work has a lot of the detail in it that he spent a lot of time --

13:20:28 [Frozen]

13:20:49 In courthouses the work is invaluable to people doing genealogy and groups who pass through Hawkins and Hancock County Tennessee, particular.

13:20:49 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: How much do you think this migratory pattern has to do with people just trying to escape racial oppression?

13:20:49 >>WAYNE WINKLER:

13:20:56 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Are people moving it seems to be moving further west further north. Are they being pushed?

13:21:03 The going on their own volition? What do you think?

13:21:12 >>WAYNE WINKLER: A little of both I would say. When you lived in Hancock County and the people there considered you a Melungeon, that was really going to limit your opportunities.

13:21:19 Even if you want to get an education, when you come back it is kind of an uphill struggle.

13:21:24 I had the privilege of knowing people who did that and made good lives for themselves but the really was not room

13:21:36 for a lot of ambitious people and if you had a name or were associated with Melungeon families you were just going to do better going somewhere else.

13:21:49 Where they did not know about that they never heard of Melungeons and you were not going to be suspect because of your name.

13:21:57 People might have questions about your skin color but people from Appalachia came in all different shades.

13:22:10 Up north people didn't seem to notice that so much so I think the racial aspect was very important.

13:22:10 And the economic aspect of course. They were better jobs up north.

13:22:10 Better farmland up north people had a lot of motivation to move on.

13:22:28 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: And a similar thing happened with the Mayle family. They migrated not just because of racism but also employment but also being in a community where you are not judged immediately free don't have that family history.

13:22:37 I'm not saying family history is bad but that negative views or stereotypes in the local communities.

13:22:53 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: So Wayne they would like for you to give the name of Dr. Kennedy spoke again.

13:22:56 >>WAYNE WINKLER: It is the Melungeons, the resurrection of a proud people published by Mercer University press, 1994.

13:23:07 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Again we will list these resources in our toolkit. Interesting to have books that are credible that folks can read about.

13:23:16 Another question has anyone come across any textiles related specifically to Melungeon families?

13:23:26 Is there any particular textile patterns that you are aware of?

13:23:29 >>WAYNE WINKLER: Not anything that is out of the ordinary from what you would find in Appalachian families generally.

13:23:41 I'm thinking of quilts and things like that primarily and I think that just comes out of the tradition of living in Appalachia.

13:23:50 A lot of cultural ideas seem to get mixed up right at the very beginning of Appalachia.

13:23:57 A lot of influences were blended together and I think that created its own little subcategory.

13:24:03 So I've not ever been aware of anything along those lines that was specifically Melungeon.

13:24:06 That word Appalachian.

13:24:16 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: But I think, too, if you are talking about the blending of cultures if you look at some of the textile art,

13:24:31 Of Appalachia, I think this is why it is so universal because within it, you see Native American, you see Scotch, Irish, British, African art all intertwined within

13:24:43 The Appalachian, what is clearly defined. As an Appalachian culture quilt might make more sense now. If you understand the history.

13:24:50 >>WAYNE WINKLER: That's right.

13:24:50 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: I was saying music as well.

13:24:50 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Oh definitely.

13:24:53 >>LYN FORD: Definitely.

13:25:05 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: And certainly storytelling and music is a big part of what makes maybe this is what really makes Appalachia distinctive. What do you think?

13:25:11 >>LYN FORD: When I started out as a storyteller and I apologize my wife I went out I had to get back.

13:25:22 When I started out as a storyteller and told some Jack tales there were people of European-American heritage who want to know why I wasn't telling African stories.

13:25:34 And I would try to explain to them that although I have such stories in my family and I've researched them,

13:25:36 The Jack tales were the ones I heard as I was growing up more so than any others.

13:25:39 Those types of tales.

13:26:06 By limiting -- because of who they thought I should be, they were actually stunting my career. I couldn't get a job at a festival where the banjo pickers were predominantly European-American because they didn't think a Black person could tell tales of Jack.

13:26:24 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Again being limited and defined. So we have one of the questions is what specific lessons or antidotes may each of you share from your work to help our divided political tribes address the deep wounds of race in America?

13:26:36 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: I would have to say pass on stories. I cannot stress this enough.

13:26:38 Past those stories because we begin to heal as a Melungeon.

13:26:52 How it entophyte we can heal once we share those stories our ancestors come back enter with us the more we share these stories and we share them with our children and pass them on.

13:26:55 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Pass it on. Wayne or Lyn?

13:27:17 >>WAYNE WINKLER: I would agree. It is tell your children but it. My son was telling me the other day I that story 100 times and I said you will probably hear it 100 more but really telling it to your children, too.

13:27:17 >>LYN FORD: Exactly. It gives them roots and I keep saying foundation.

13:27:20 We need those foundations look at what young people gone through now that we thought be left behind after the 60s.

13:27:31 The stories the oldest stories going to the elders and gathering those stories.

13:27:39 Foundation is so important but also there's a connection to history besides the connection to heritage and that makes it important for young people to realize oh yes,

13:27:49 My family went through this and I am the result of their dreams and goals.

13:27:49 That helps them to get through the times that we been having now.

13:28:05 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: Some stories we are sharing are from these early 1800s or the late 1700s continue to share about our families. Just think how long they've lasted and will continue to last.

13:28:22 >>LYN FORD: And some folktales in my family can be traced right back to the West Coast of Africa.

13:28:22 But if I had not heard them and remembered them, because they were not written down, I would not be able to say that to my children.

13:28:22 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: Yes.

13:28:29 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: And the fact we still struggle with oral history Inc. seen as a valid form of preservation of history.

13:28:42 And of Appalachia this is another reason why storytelling in the region so important, so much of Appalachian history is enveloped in those stories.

13:28:50 That if they are not captured and explored like Wayne has died and like each of you have done through your own personal histories, we would not be able to even tell this story today. We would still be wondering about it.

13:29:09 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: You make a good point. First they want scholarly research and books and so on and I'd remind them of where we are and then they finally agreed to do the storytelling interviews and so on and so forth.

13:29:23 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Right even my own family history which is connected now I'm learning, with red bones, my mom mom's mother was Choctaw. And this whole part of her history we know so little about.

13:29:39 So I become now permitted committed to this idea of knowing more about that aspect of her history that she did not feel comfortable really sharing or talking about which I think is terrible.

13:29:43 That there are aspects of your identity that you feel you cannot openly share.

13:29:52 So we are kind of running out of time. So I want to take this opportunity to thank each one of our panelists for this wonderful discussion.

13:30:08 And to encourage everyone to visit if you missed today's discussion or you had difficulty hearing my beginning, I just want to let everyone know this is our last freedom stories for the year.

13:30:11 We are signing off again until January 9 of 2021,

13:30:24 To begin our second series of six public discussions. We will do it the same way.

13:30:24 Same media outlet same time. 1 o'clock-2:30 PM.

13:30:40 We will be joining with post Civil War discussions about the birth, the rise of American Jim Crow.

13:30:45 And particularly and how it presented itself in Appalachia so we are hoping to have again this same type of wonderful panel that you've experienced today.

13:30:51 So I do appreciate everyone listening.

13:30:59 Any closing comments from anyone? We got about three minutes.

13:31:10 >>LYN FORD: I just want to thank everybody and it's so wonderful to get to know people who are like-minded and trying to keep the family heritage within the view of others.

13:31:10 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: Thank you Lyn.

13:31:24 >>ANTHONY MAYLE: I would just like to thank all of US well and I'm happy to meet all of you and hopefully get to know each other further in the future.

13:31:31 I want to remind everyone as we go for the holidays, meet family away, that is your chance.

13:31:31 That is your chance to start recording those histories, sharing those stories.

13:31:41 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: If we are going to know this history it needs to happen now. Wayne?

13:31:47 >>WAYNE WINKLER: That's true that's very true and you could become a hero in your own family if you'll make a recording.

13:32:02 Of the elders, make sure you get their words recorded. Not everyone in the family was there in the room when that story was being told but you could share that and pass that on.

13:32:06 Technology makes that very easy these days it just takes the bare minimum of planning just finding the right moments.

13:32:15 They found that people love to tell their story.

13:32:15 They love to pass on that information to younger people.

13:32:27 >>DR. ALICESTYNE TURLEY: And as an academic I'm going to say if you are a professor out there looking for research topics, you just heard a wonderful research topic for your PhD or your senior level students.

13:32:36 I encourage you to push it try to get in our history books so that we can re-create a more accurate history, American history.

13:32:41 So until we are together again after the holidays,

13:32:41 Please take care of yourselves.

13:32:46 And please join us in January.

13:32:48 For our freedom stories to kick off 2021.

[End of Program]