Clarion Review

Family & Relationships

Our Multi-National Heritage To Adam: Ancestors of Merlene Hutto Byars - Volume 1
Merlene Hutto Byars
Xlibris
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Three Stars (out of Five)

Tracing one's ancestry is a time-consuming, intricate procedure filled with frustrations and setbacks. Meticulous research and tenacity are often not enough to obtain information on people who have been deceased for centuries. Yet, some researchers have taken on this task with confidence and unrelenting spirit. All but unbelievably, Merlene Hutto Byars set out to follow the line of her ancestors to the Biblical era; a feat that will raise eyebrows in skepticism, as well as admiration.

Our Multi-National Heritage to Adam is a family record created for anyone interested in this author's heritage. Her book is an example of what can be accomplished with longterm dedication and attention to hidden details. As time passes, even the surface of a gravestone erodes to the point where dates and names can hardly be read with accuracy. Every piece of usable data may require the ability to decipher nearly unintelligible handwriting or carvings. The book begins with Generation No. 1, the descendants of Henry I (b. 885-914, d. 939-999), and ends with Generation No. 37, listing a descendant born as late as 1982. The ancestors of Abraham going back to Adam and Eve appear in a diagram only.

Additionally, Byars relied on information covering five generations of ancestry for Esther Ray McClintock and Frank Pickens Williams. This more recent material was passed on from parents, and the rest acquired by examining tombstones in cemeteries throughout the US and Europe, along with scrutiny of documentation in university and museum libraries. The result is complicated and somewhat difficult to follow. The first-third of her book is composed of diagrams, which serve their purpose, but do not enhance the readability of her text. The remainder is a numbered arrangement of material followed by an index of individuals named in her research. She provides extensive biographical and historical explanatory notes for some sections, including a limited number of black and white photographs. Typographical errors and

basic copy-editing mistakes mar the quality of her work at the production level.

Merlene Hutto Byars has a background in accounting and journalism. She's listed in various *Who's Who* publications and recognized for her history books and artwork, which have been on display at prestigious universities such as Oxford and Cambridge. She resides in South Carolina.

The complexity of her endeavor, and the overwhelming effort involved in creating such a testimony, warrants notice regardless of the lack of general marketability. This special-interest project will appeal to historians and genealogists seeking ideas and guidance on the methods of presenting hundreds or even thousands of years of lineage in a coherent layout.

Julia Ann Charpentier