

THREE CHORDS AND THE TRUTH



Part 1

by Hank Snowjob

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If you are, like me, a student of Mathis University, don't forget to remit some tuition from time to time. My observations, correct or not, would never have occurred without essays such as the Salem witch trial piece, wherein Miles extends back in time the chicanery, deception and nepotism which we know surrounds us today. Heck, now we're back to the Phoenicians! As in the cosmologist's wisecrack, I reckon "it's turtles all the way down".

Recently, I viewed Part 1 of Ken Burns' eight-part "Country Music" and noticed some of the old photos looked fake. Spurred by Miles, I see such images with increasing frequency. Watching Part 2 the next night I started noticing large noses. After Part 3 I reviewed all three parts and additionally applied the powerful Mathis technique for analysis "does this make any sense?" to the best of my modest abilities.

I quit Part 4 after about eight minutes – I’ve seen enough Elvis crap for seven lifetimes, plus Miles has him all wrapped up nice and pretty. However, it was worth learning that Johnny Cash served in military intelligence.

This writing is in no wise meant to disparage Ken Burns. He is just another useless corporal from the army of historians who have told us *everything but what really happened*, about everything, for countless years gone by. But, Ken, you look so adorable, and narrator Peter Coyote [real name Peter Cohon/**Cohen**] could durn near convince me that my ten-toed granny was a mermaid.

We are to learn that the two prime movers of what became the “country music” of the show’s title are The Carters and Jimmie Rodgers – the grandparents, the archetypes, the roots, the Henry Fords of it all.

AP Carter married Sara Dougherty and his brother married Maybelle Addington, both women known to each other. The women, with AP, became the Carter Family, and the brother doesn’t figure in music-wise. For the first ten years of marriage we are told AP was rarely around, selling sapling trees on foot (I guess he one-upped Johnny Appleseed) and searching the region for traditional songs. The self-taught Sara and Maybelle became proficient singers and musicians (autoharp, guitar), with Maybelle even becoming some kind of guitar savant.

In 1927 a music recording engineer and talent scout named Ralph Peer was visiting Bristol Tennessee for two weeks seeking new talent. The Carters went there, recorded two songs, and came back the next day, but without AP because he was searching for a car tire, or some such. After the women recorded again they all went back home with \$300 and purportedly forgot about the whole event. Coyote faux-quotes Sara as saying, “we made it back home and *never* thought *no* more about it” just to underline they were plain speaking country folk.

On nearly the same day, a struggling singer named Jimmie Rodgers drove to Bristol with one of three band-mates to ask his friend’s father to help them get a car for touring. Amazingly, they learned that Ralph Peer was there for two weeks seeking talent, so they got the other two performers and started practicing in a rooming house, planning to record the next day. During the practice session they had an argument which arose from deciding Jimmie was not good enough and they broke up. Jimmie said he’d go to Mr. Peer himself. He did, recorded a couple of tunes, and left town.

So, both the Carters and Rodgers are dirt poor rubes who are rubbing up against the opportunity of a lifetime, but it’s just a real yawner for all four. Further, these eventual titans of early country music just happened to be in the same little town on nearly the same day and record songs for the same to-be-influential founding agent of a new industry which involved electronic recording and broadcasting of voice and music across the nation. Here we are duty bound to ask the always appropriate Miles question “did this actually happen?” I pass the judgment to you, dear reader.

AP was said to be a “song catcher”, traveling around the countryside seeking out people who “knew a song” they could reveal to him – as if he’s a noble minded anthropologist working for the Red Cross. At one point in the narrative I think Burns slips and it’s actually said that AP wanted songs which had no copyright. In other words he was looking for product to steal and then make money from. Gosh, who does that remind us of? Also, it’s told that AP had a hard time remembering melodies (not ideal for a song catcher) and would come back to the two women with new songs and they would set the words to old songs they already knew. Peter Coyote did not explain how that helped preserve the new melody, which I’m pretty sure is the most important component of any song.

In all the early and very fuzzy Carter photos AP looks pasted in. I’m thinking he was an agent of the blossoming radio and recording industries who was stealing music and promoting the eventually successful Carter duo; and the photos are backfilled to shore up the family angle.

AP Carter:



AP with the girls:



AP comfortably seated on a car bumper:



I think the background for this one is from a Vanilla Fudge album:



Miles: yes, extravagantly fake, all of them. Was he supposed to be 6 foot 9? Or were they 4 foot 5?

I'm guessing this is real — taken after the project had legs (no more need to backfill):



Hmmm. Either AP is pasted in, or this just indicates he's not related to these folks:



Miles: note he is no longer 7 feet tall.

Well, on to Jimmie:



Nice beak. Jimmie was poor, of course, and a rascal and squandered any money which came his way, and he traveled constantly all over the place, was ill with tuberculosis, and the next thing you know he's a recording star and then becomes immensely popular and blah blah blah.

Two of his earliest and still most famous songs, "Blue Yodel No. 1" and "In the Jailhouse Now" are said to have been influenced/derived from black musicians he had known. Whaddya know, another song stealer catcher! (Hopefully this last won't earn me some sort of coonskin fatwa).

It is briefly mentioned that his sister in law Elsie McWilliams contributed to more than a third of his recorded songs.

(from Wikipedia): Elsie McWilliams was [sic] **songwriter** who wrote **for** Jimmie Rodgers ... even though she is only **officially** credited with writing twenty songs, **actually** wrote or co-wrote 39 songs for Rogers [sic]. McWilliams was **his most frequent collaborator**. She was the first woman to make a career as a country music songwriter.

Rodgers asked McWilliams to help him with songwriting after he secured a recording contract and McWilliams agreed, traveling to recording sessions and collaborating. **Rodgers could not read music**, so McWilliams would play the songs and he would learn them by ear ... Many of her songs became top hits ... Part of the reason he needed help was because **his health was poor**. Even though McWilliams helped him write songs, **she only took credit for some, stating that she wanted the full amount of the money to go to Rodgers and his family**. Sometimes when she received payment for her work, she would turn the royalties back over to Rodgers.

Nice to finally learn the difference between “officially” and “actually”. I’ve been told that when a doctor asks how much alcohol you drink, he/she silently doubles the number. Did Elsie write 78 of his songs? We’ll never know. It is implied he had other collaborators. What does that mean? He recorded 110 songs according to Wiki, but it is unclear how many he wrote. So, he was chronically ill and couldn’t read music but became the Granddaddy of a gigantic music genre, and wealthy in his own lifetime (that money from Elsie must have helped, too).

We are carefully informed that Jimmie represented the mischievous side of the music – the wanderer, the ne’er do well, the drinker, the woman chaser, the gambler. The Carters handled the family matters – mother’s love, the church, the things that get you misty-eyed. This sounds a lot like cognitive dissonance to me – one of the most effective brainwashing techniques ever devised. The Manipulators among us knew this principle long before it had a fancy name, e.g. the Salem witch trials presented a face of Christianity that was a combination of Nervous Nellie and Vindictive Bastard. Trying to reconcile this with Christian Charity creates cognitive dissonance.

Miles has taught us to look for binary choices, binary concepts, such as this. It was recycled thirty years later for the “British Invasion”. The Beatles were the nice boys and the Rolling Stones were the bad boys, take your pick. Better yet, buy both of their albums, and roll up a doobie. Further, who is drawn to naughty things? Adolescents! So this is part of the infantilization of the populace, an important ongoing effort by our shadowy governors.

And speaking of naughty, the oh-so-clever opening to each of the Burns episodes has a sequence of persons singing the same banjo song, and passing the banjo into the next screen. For the last two a bearded man sings “rock me mama like a wagon wheel” then passes it to this nice young black woman who finishes with “rock me mama any way you feel”. For those of you who have led a sheltered life, “rock me mama” means have sexual intercourse. The *Public Broadcasting Act of 1967* was described thusly by LBJ:

“It announces to the world that our nation wants more than just material wealth ... We in America have an appetite for excellence, too. While we work every day to produce new goods and to create new wealth, we want most of all to enrich man's spirit. That is the purpose of this act.

It will give a wider and, I think, stronger voice to educational radio and television ... It will launch a major study of television's use in the Nation's classrooms and ... throughout the world. Finally — and most important — it builds a new institution: the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.”

I guess the last sentence is the kicker: create yet another corporation. Corporations were invented to hide ownership, and in this case, to hide agendas too. Rock me Lyndon!

One of the Bristol sessions anecdotes was Sara didn't like the song “Single Girl-Married Girl” but sang it anyway. It outlines how single girls can do what they please, but married girls have chores and responsibilities. Sounds like an early iteration of the men are pigs project. Hey, throw in infantilization too (ever heard “Girls Just Want to Have Fun” by Cyndi Lauper?).

I've read that Mayer Amschel Bauer held a meeting of conspirators at his home in Frankfurt in 1773, to discuss taking over the world. One of the numerous strategies was “the use of alcoholic liquors, drugs, moral corruption, and all forms of vice, be used systematically ... to corrupt the morals of the youth of the nations.” If this anecdote is apocryphal, it doesn't matter. The scheme has been used over and over for a long while. It's supremely simple: what excellent feat of creativity or exactitude has ever been accomplished by someone whose brain is mush from getting loaded? (I mean, except for Hank Williams, whom we will visit soon).



Next comes The Great Depression, which should be called World War One and a Half because it was an economic war carefully orchestrated against the entire populace of the US (and the world for that matter). Ben Bernanke said in 2002, “Regarding the Great Depression, you're right. We did it. We're very sorry.” But by then no one cared anymore. Well I do! When my mother graduated high school in 1934, a few of her friends who were slightly better off financially gave her a pair of silk panties, something she couldn't afford. I want to cry every time I think of it.

In 1930 The Carter Family had a hit with “Keep on the Sunny Side”, which became their signature song during The Depression. Other songs at this time were “Worried Man Blues” (Carters) and “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?” and “Happy Days Are Here Again” and “On the

Sunny Side of the Street” (this last undoubtedly old man Rockefeller’s favorite ...brutalize 120 million of your fellow citizens and get your name in a happy song). Radio began serving the bankers well.

Peter Coyote carries on, and just like every other “historian” talks about the Depression as something that just happened, and gee whiz isn’t that a shame. We are told the recording manufacturers took a real hit, and the Carters suffered diminishment as well. Jimmie prevailed quite well financially. There were rumors of him distributing kindnesses while touring – buying a little boy a guitar, paying a widow’s mortgage, etc. Really? In the late 1970s I was one evening in a small café in Detroit and a man rushed in for a coffee to go and announced to the patrons that he was driving Aretha Franklin and she was right outside in the car. I still don’t know if that was really true.

Coyote explains that during these hard times Jimmie was so successful because his voice was so sincere (and Peter should know – that’s why he was hired). George Burns once said “Sincerity, if you can fake that, you’ve got it made.”



In the final section about Jimmie he toured for a long period while ill and this supposedly made him more ill. He did some last recordings in New York City. We are told his “lungs were shredded” from TB and he had to sit or lie down after each take. I’m not a singing coach or a physical therapist, but I just listened to his last recording “Years Ago” and it sounds to me like all his other stuff. He died within days.

Another fake death? Was he tired of playing the hick? Remember, Artie Shaw quit touring because he was tired of playing “Begin the Beguine”. Was Jimmie retired as an agent, job well done? Was he “already rich” as Miles has discovered over and over. I have no idea. I just know that the more we are bid worship someone, the more likely it is they are big phonies. When you are told for the hundredth time that some person or idea is supercalifragilisticexpialidocious, go for a nice walk, take a nap, and call a friend and ask how he’s doing.

This list of birthdates close to Jimmie's helped me orient him in time:

1896 * Everett Dirksen * George Burns * Howard Hawks * Wallis Simpson * Raymond Massey * Ruth Gordon * Ethel Waters * Ira Gershwin * Jimmy Doolittle * **1897** * Jimmie Rodgers * Amelia Earhart * Walter Winchell * Thornton Wilder * Frank Capra * George Szell * Anthony Eden * Fredric March * Al Sherman * Walter Pigeon * William Faulkner * Edith Head * Lucky Luciano * **1898** * Bertolt Brecht * Golda Meir * Armand Hammer * Bennett Cerf * Norman Vincent Peale * Stephen Vincent Benet * George Gershwin * Alexander Calder * Henry Moore

(Note the last two – involved in the crapification of Art, which Miles has so painfully uncovered)

We're now on to Part 2 and 3 of the Burns work, but let me interject that I have numerous favorite country and western songs, starting with Jimmie Rodgers, all the way forward to George Strait's "Blue Clear Sky" single. That was the late 1990s, when I read that the prime demographic for country radio at the time was women in their 30s. I quit abruptly and never listened again. I realized all the songs were men either head over heels in love, or groveling due to some behavioral infraction which only women can detect. Hints of the "men are pigs" project? Miles has lamented recently, after being exposed to some recent country radio play, that the whole corpus is deeply damaged.

The show repeatedly discusses the spread of radio stations. Well, that's really what this is all about: the consolidation of media and media content. First "they" (using agents like AP Carter) went about gathering copyright free songs which would resonate with the target audience, then "they" started grooming their own performers and writers to continue the product. There were several radio shows similar to the eventually dominating Grand Ol' Opry, the most successful airing from Chicago! If you attended in person, you would see performers dressed in goofy outfits which supposedly typified country folk, and generous use of the blacked-out tooth.



Then you've got the singing cowboy era, from the 1930s until WWII, dominated by Gene Autry. Later in life he joined the Forbes 400 list, and may be a candidate for the "already rich" category which Miles has shown us so many times. I think the cowboy craze was partly social engineering

to groom our young men for the war. For folks who don't think planning is that long range, I saved this gem from ten years ago:

Golf is notoriously fickle, yet golf apparel manufacturers leave no marketing opportunity to chance. What [Tiger] Woods wears each day at every major championship this year has been scripted for him by his sponsor Nike since last summer. To ensure that retailers have a new design or color modeled by Woods on their shelves this weekend, Nike had its first meetings about Woods's 2009 British Open wardrobe **17 months ago**. (New York Times 07/13/2009)

[Funnily, it rained two of the days and he had to wear a jacket. And this is planning for the sale of some shirts – not taking over the world!]

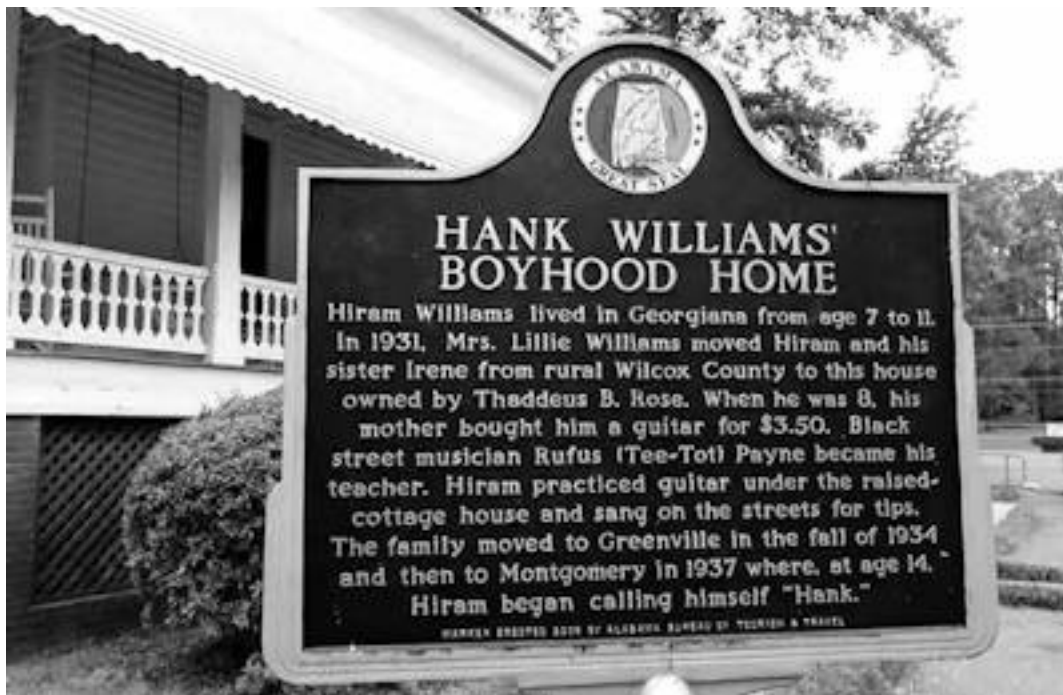
We are told that Gene Autry's wife kept a file of every fan letter's return address and that when he toured, in each town he would consult her file and look up that town's letter senders in the local phone book and call each them for a brief chat. Memo to Ken Burns: Thanks, Ken, you just saved me from having to prove you're a silly blowhard. When Jimmie Rodgers died, Autry recorded four bestselling songs in tribute. Ka-ching! Jealous, Elton?

Moving on, we meet Minnie Pearl, born Sarah Ophelia Colley Cannon, near Nashville, to a "prosperous lumberman" [per Wiki]. The people we've met so far grew up not having two potatoes to rub together (but Mama bought him/her that ol' guitar anyway). She attended the prestigious Ward-Belmont College, which became part of what is now Belmont University in Nashville, which has a unique Music-Business school, and whose president earned over \$2 million in 2016. She was trained as an actor.

So, her whole adult life is a lie. Any woman from wealth who went to an exclusive finishing school and goes around acting like a hick, is not trying to help her lesser brethren. She's laughing *at* them, not *with* them. Worse, her ongoing schtick was that it's hard for her to get male companionship because she's not "purty" like other girls. This should sicken women everywhere, and I don't mean under today's supercharged political correctness, I mean in any decade or century gone by. That said, the price tag hanging from the hat is genius, and probably the only reason we still remember her.



OK, Hank Williams. He's bigger than big, we are instructed — a Jimmie Rodgers 2.0 we might say. Born in 1923, his birth certificate wasn't registered until 1934 (we're off to a rip-roaring start). He was poor, of course. His daddy left when he was young. Mama bought him that ol' guitar anyway (oh, wait, Wiki says there are several versions of who bought it). Here is the historical plaque from his historical boyhood home SW of Montgomery Alabama:



He only lived here for four years. Between this plaque, Wiki, and his official biography, I had to construct a small spreadsheet to reconcile the dates of the various towns he lived in before moving to Montgomery in 1937, because they all told different stories. The book "Hank

Williams: The Biography” was written in 2004 by three men. Why do you need three men to write a book? To keep all the lies adhering to official policy?

It’s generally agreed that his mother brought the family to this small town and they stayed with a cousin, then got a little house to rent but it burned down and days later while stopping at the post office, a complete stranger, Thaddeus B. Rose, who had heard of her misfortune, said he had an empty house she could live in, rent free.



Nice house, Mom! Mind you, this is in the depths of The Depression. Peter Coyote solemnly informs us that “She stuffed feed sacks with corn shucks for beds, used apple boxes for her dresser, and cooked in the fireplace.” Further, a neighbor declared “They had no money”. She supposedly roasted peanuts for Hank to sell around town.

Mentioned on the plaque, a black street musician, known locally T-Tot, short for teetotaler, taught Hank to play guitar in exchange for meals or money from Mama. T-Tot’s nickname was a joke in that he was known for always having a flask of tea spiked with whiskey on his person. He would have been about 50 years old at this time. In other words, the perfect companion for your ten year old son.

Ma Williams then moved to a nearby town and started a boarding house because she heard that was a good business to get into. I’m pretty sure you need to buy a house to open a boarding house. That’s a lot of roasted peanuts!

In 1978 Johnny Cash and wife June Carter starred in a movie titled “Thaddeus Rose and Eddie” which had nothing to do with the Thaddeus Rose of the plaque. I think it’s an inside joke, and we are not amongst the insiders.

This is from a little timeline I found on the Web:

1937 age 14 moves to Montgomery AL and wins a singing contest, gets his own radio show on WFSA

1942 gets fired from WFSA radio for drunkenness

1945 hired back to sing on WFSA

1946 goes to Nashville to sell songs to Acuff-Rose

1947 signs with MGM records and has first hit: “Move It on Over”.

1949 joins Grand Ol’ Opry

1952 fired from Opry for drunkenness

1953 age 29, dead from drugs and alcohol

In 1944 he married Audrey and they fought bitterly and often until 1952. Why? Because he was a drunkard. Even still, he could write classic country song within minutes, usually on scraps of paper. I guess this talent conveniently left him more time to drink. Peter Coyote tells us Acuff-Rose publishers informed Hank that in the first half of 1952 alone 89 of his songs had been recorded (I’m assuming by Hank and others, it is not stated). Wiki lists 167 songs written by Hank, 42 of them co-written. He couldn’t read music. I don’t mean to be churlish, but wouldn’t that make all of them co-written?

A few years ago, when I became skeptical about the Beatles, I pondered the number of (actually very nice) songs Lennon and McCartney were credited with vis a vis the time elapsed. Let’s revisit this concept:

Merle Haggard	59	over 50 years	
Willie Nelson	36	over 50 years	
Dolly Parton	41	over 50 years	
Hank Williams	167	over 12 years	can’t read music
Lennon/Macca	180	over 8 years	can’t read music

Roger Miller, no songwriting slouch (21 songs) once said, “The human mind is a wonderful thing – it starts working from before you’re born and doesn’t stop till you sit down to write a song.” I think this might be the one time in his life he was being serious!

But we are told that Hank, a hopeless drunkard who was constantly touring, and fighting with his wife left us a treasure trove of memorable songs. Then he died, high on alcohol and morphine.

Hank and Audrey (a paste-up, but still informative, if you nose what I mean):



Drinking, drugging, stormy marriage, brilliant, can't conform, ground-breaking, flawed, unhappy, died too young ...this crap has been shoved down our throats ever since. Hollywood, rock and roll, avant garde art, revolutionary literature.

Hank Williams dies January 1953 age 29

James Dean dies September 1955 age 24

Buddy Holly dies February 1959 age 22

From 1999-2015 in the US 1309 children age 5-12 committed suicide

Social engineering at its most successful? Peter Coyote calmly explains to us that during Hank's last years men had been to war, women had been to work, the divorce rate was skyrocketing, and songs about cheating and drinking were becoming common. All according to plan, I say.

Hank Williams Jr. during the show protests that the first rock and roll song is not "Rock Around the Clock" by Bill Haley and the Comets, but "Move It on Over" by his pop. Fine, you sold me; George Thorogood's 1978 cover sure doesn't sound like a country song. One could see in Hank the germ of the entire rock and roll freak show. He should have smashed up a few hotel rooms while he was at it.

Kinky Friedman, one of only two admittedly Jewish country singers, bids us join in the fun:



I think Hank was an early project, with many to follow. It began in Montgomery when he was 14, and his life before that was backfill, yielding some inconsistencies. I think the songs were supplied to him. I think this was a model for the creation of celebrities out of whole cloth, the machinery behind the scenes greasing the tracks of a closed and highly monitored system.

Hank, clowning, and the actor who portrayed him in a 2015 biopic:



It's sad to contemplate all the musicians, as we come forward in time, who have been locked out, who haven't been broadly heard and enjoyed. And it's criminal that the means of communication in our land have come under the control of an insular group of greedy malcontents who view the common man as a herd animal – and I'm not talkin' about little dogies.

If this genre had developed organically over the years, it would probably find a wider audience since it would be rid of songs designed for social engineering and cynical disdain. There would probably be a few songs about drinking too much, but not 7,000 of them! And divorce happens to people, but we really don't need "hit" after "hit" droning on about it. I use scare quotes here because we are told what is a hit, what is worthwhile, what is popular, and the radio tightens its cinch belt around the flow of what is broadcast.

As a boy in the 60s, I wondered what was going on with all the sequin suits at Opry-type venues. I let it go because I respected other people's interests. Now I know different. I just learned from Burns that Nudie Cohn was one of the two big tailors who made these outfits, and now I know that the people wearing them are Cohns also. They are laughing *at* you, not *with* you. They are not your friends.



Please join me for Part 2, where we look at many more photos.

Miles: it is also worth looking at Ken Burns' bio. He went to Hampshire College, a famous spook college I have previously outed. We are told he was poor and paid for tuition by working in a record store like Jack Black in *High Fidelity*, but you would have to be high to believe it. Tuition at Hampshire is on a par with Harvard—so you don't work your way through it. You need wealthy parents. Just a few months out of college Burns founded a production company with his film teacher Elaine Mays. She had been part of the founding faculty of Hampshire in 1968, so another spook. She had come to Hampshire with Jerome Liebling, and both were of course Jewish. We aren't told how this dirt-poor kid who lived on \$2500 a year was able to found a production company. By age 23 Burns was working for the BBC, and the next year he began working on the Brooklyn Bridge film. So a meteoric rise, as usual.

If we check Burns genealogy, we find he is also a Morris, Bancroft, Austin, Powers, Howard, Ogden, Freeman, Baldwin, Dodd, Mead, Winchester, Howe, Burwell, Newman, Noble, Dewey Clapp, and a Stanhope. On his father's side he is a Lee, Moore, and a Forsythe. These lines are far more scrubbed, but best guess is he is from the Burns, Barons of Wemyss Castle. They came to the US even before becoming Baronets. *Finding your Roots* admits Burns is a cousin of poet Robert Burns. His 2g-grandfather was Abraham Smith, scrubbed at Geni, but possibly a cousin of the Smiths, bankers of Nottingham. The Deweys take us back to Salem. The Clapps link us to Eric Clapton. But the most important thing admitted by *Finding your Roots* is that Burns is

related pretty closely to Abraham Lincoln. Of course this links Burns to all Presidents and all famous people, meaning he is of the Families. Figures, doesn't it?