

## **The Meriwether Family in America, Volume I, The Colonists**

*By Guy Meriwether Benson*

**WELL, IT'S HERE!!** For years you have heard about it, wondered whether it would ever get finished and maybe even contributed to it. By it, I mean the update of *The Meriwethers and Their Connections* published by Nelson Heath Meriwether in 1964. The new book is titled ***The Meriwether Family in America, Volume I, The Colonists***. NOW is your chance to own a copy.

*Volume I*, the first of a projected series, covers in detail the first two generations of the family in Virginia and an introduction of the third generation. Also included are the results of our continuing search for our family origins and the histories of families connected to the Meriwethers. The Meriwether story is presented in the context of the founding of Virginia and the beginnings of our eventual nation. The chapters provide detailed stories of each of the Meriwethers in this early period: their lives, their families, and their business and political involvements.

The book is 720 pages in 8 ½" x 11" format, plus eight pages of color images. Included are 51 images, 52 maps and 43 appendixes (including 61 documents) supporting research for this volume and for future research. The book is Smyth Sown with hard-bound covers in navy color with gold lettering on the spine and front, similar to the original Heath Meriwether book (see the picture on page 4). The book is being published for the Meriwether Society by Otter Bay Books, who published the reprint of Heath's book in 1991.

For you or some special member of your family, *The Meriwether Family in America* is also being offered in a leather binding. From Otter Bay Books: "...navy blue leather and a blue marbled end sheet that will look fantastic with it." As these books are bound by hand, extra time will be required for delivery.

A special insert in this issue provides the information for ordering *Volume I* with or without the leather binding. Orders received by the date indicated therein should be delivered before Christmas, except for those with leather binding.

The history behind the creation of *Volume I* could provide enough material for an interesting book in itself. It all started with Joel Meriwether, founder and first editor of *Meriwether Connections* and former president of the Society. Some of Joel's research was published in the early issues of *Meriwether Connections*, but he soon realized that the number of changes indicated that a simple revision of Heath Meriwether's book was not possible. Instead, it was determined in 1991 that a reprint edition of the NHM book would be published for the membership. It was also concluded that a complete update would require more than one volume. During the 1990s, further research into the English origins of our Meriwether progenitor, Nicholas I, and research into early branches of the family was carried out and several related articles on the results published in *Meriwether Connections*.

In 2000, Joel Meriwether, then president of the Society, asked Maury Kendall if he would take on the task of revising the NHM book as *Volume I*. Maury organized and outlined the volume with the help of Monte Monroe, Annie Laurie Hulen (NHM's daughter), Edy Macdonald, and Joe Oglesby. To manage the effort, he established the Volume I Working Group consisting of those just named and also eventually including Michael DeJonge, Charlotte Henderson, Heath J. Meriwether (NHM's son), Meriwether Schmid, and myself. Maury was the coordinator of the Working Group.

Originally, *Volume I* was to cover in detail the first three generations in America and identify

the fourth and fifth generations; however, it became apparent that connections (surnamed families marrying Meriwethers) also contributed much to subsequent generations and should be included in *Volume I*. These included the families of Bathurst, Browne, Clements, Crawford, and Williamson. As a result, the scope of *Volume I* was focused on the first two generations and an introduction of the third generation.

Maury Kendall began writing the front section and the chapter on our British origins and he asked me to tackle the Essex County, Virginia, Meriwethers. Concurrent with the construction of *Volume I*, the search for Nicholas I's origin continued with first, Monte Monroe extending the work Maury had instituted, and then with myself. Three professional researchers, including two in England, were contracted, and available information on the internet searched. Meriwether Schmid invested over twenty trips to England and the Family History Library in Salt Lake City in the search. DNA, a new tool, was used by Meriwether Schmid and Sharon Pike to determine a haplotype for the Meriwethers (a haplotype is a pattern in an individual's DNA that is shared by the male members of a family). An enormous amount of information has been collected, but none has yet led to the location where Nicholas I was born or the identification of his parents. These efforts and the people involved are summarized in chapter 1 of *Volume I*. The search continues.

The chapters covering the first two generations were completed by 2009 and the chapters involving the family connections were completed by 2012. At the beginning of 2013, Maury Kendall, then in his early 90s, asked me to take over the job as the *Volume I* coordinator—indeed big shoes to fill. The last three years have been employed to fill in missing research (myself), adding a bibliography (Charlotte Henderson), developing appendixes (myself and others), indexing (Joe Oglesby), upgrading and adding new images (Mike DeJonge), restyling (Joe Oglesby and Mike DeJonge), extensive editing (Joe Oglesby, Mike DeJonge, Heath J Meriwether and myself) and identifying and contracting a publisher to print the book (Annie Hulen and Monte Monroe).

Well, it is finally done! It is a monument to Maury Kendall. Many people not mentioned above have contributed to this milestone. There is not enough space to mention them all here, but many are included in the "Acknowledgment" section in *Volume I*.



**General Maury Kendall and Joe Oglesby  
May, 2015**

### **Volume I Table of Contents**

- Chapter 1 British Origins
- Chapter 2 The Colonies, A Choice
- Chapter 3 First Colonial Meriwethers
- Chapter 4 Nicholas Meriwether I
- Chapter 5 Colonial Ladies To Match
- Chapter 6 Family Matures and Thrives
- Chapter 7 The Settled and the Restless
- Chapter 8 Nicholas Meriwether II
- Chapter 9 Francis Meriwether II
- Chapter 10 Thomas Meriwether
- Chapter 11 Clough, Clements, Williamson  
Connections
- Chapter 12 Crawford Connections
- Chapter 13 Bathurst Connections
- Chapter 14 Browne Connections