

OUR HISTORY

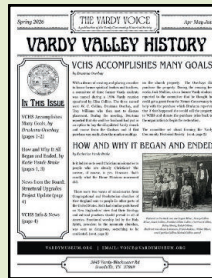


Nestled in the mountains of Central Appalachia, the historic community of Vardy has been home to the Melungeons for nine generations. This mixed-ethnic group has European, African, and Native American ancestry, with some theories also pointing to Portuguese, Turkish, and Mediterranean roots. Their history has fascinated researchers and visitors alike.

Long marginalized and misunderstood, the Melungeon people preserved a rich culture of storytelling, faith, and family that still shapes Vardy-Blackwater today. Their story lives on through family histories, legends, and myths, including that of "Big Haley," the legendary moonshiner so elusive that a local deputy once said she was "catchable, but she ain't fetchable."

THE VARDY VOICE

The Vardy Voice is our official newsletter, in print for over 25 years. We email our subscribers new digital issues quarterly.



\$25 / year

- History
- Culture
- Genealogy
- Updates

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Support Our Work

Your support helps us protect Mahala Mullins' Cabin and keep the Vardy Community's story alive for future generations. As an all-volunteer organization, 100% of your donation goes straight to our programs and preservation work. Every dollar counts, and we're grateful for whatever you're able to give. Your donation is tax-deductible — Vardy Community Historical Society is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Visit vardymuseum.org/donate to support our mission.

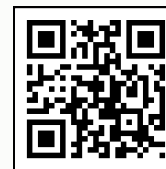
VARDY COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Museum & Visitor Center

Preserving the legacy of the Melungeons
in Vardy-Blackwater since 1998



3845 Vardy-Blackwater Rd
Sneedville, TN 37869



vardymuseum.org
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OUR MISSION: Vardy Community Historical Society strives to honor and enrich the lives of the Vardy Community and the Melungeon people through preservation of their history and culture.



VCHS MUSEUM

Housed in a vernacular wood-frame church constructed in 1899, the Vardy Museum and Visitor Center preserves photographs, artifacts, and stories from this unique center of Melungeon history. The building also tells the story of the Presbyterian missionaries who arrived in the late 1800s and established the Vardy School, which served as the community's cultural hub for nearly a century, until the 1970s.

Our on-site Vardy Genealogy Library is a vital resource for tracing Melungeon ancestry, with family trees, birth and death records, photographs, letters, census records, and personal narratives spanning generations of life in the Vardy Valley. Whether you're just beginning your family history journey or continuing years of research, the museum offers a window into a remarkable, often overlooked chapter of American history.

Plan Your Visit

The museum and cabin are open for visits. To check our current hours please visit the website. A donation of \$5 per person is suggested.

vardymuseum.org/info



Book a Tour

Private tours include time at the museum and cabin and typically take around an hour, or can be tailored to individual preferences. For tours outside of our regular hours, we require two weeks' prior notice for scheduling, along with a \$50 donation.

vardymuseum.org/tour

VCHS Events

Once a year we host Vardy Fest, a celebration of our heritage that includes presentations, music, food, crafts, and vendor booths. We also regularly hold Porch Pickings on the porch of Mahala's Cabin.

vardymuseum.org/events



Shop VCHS Gear

Tees, tanks, caps, totes, mugs & more — every purchase supports our mission:

vardymuseum.org/shop



MAHALA'S CABIN

Built from hand-hewn poplar logs atop Newman's Ridge around the Civil War era, this cabin was home to legendary Melungeon moonshiner Mahala (Collins) Mullins until her death in 1898. Mahala and her husband John raised 14 children here while running a well-known brandy business distilled from fermented pears and apples grown on the ridge.

Donated to VCHS in 1999 by Daniel Williams — son of longtime Vardy School teachers Alyce and Drew Williams — the cabin was dismantled with the help of a small grant, moved off the ridge, and reconstructed here in the Vardy Valley in 2001 using many of its original logs and stones. What was once tucked away on private property is now open for all to visit, making this piece of Appalachian history accessible to everyone who comes through its doors.