

Paperback: "A Secret Son" (about a black boy disinherited by his skin colour) By Joe Silmon-Monerri (a.k.a. Joe Silmon)

ISBN: 9780993518201 "A Secret Son" [+ subtitle: "Was Mohamed, his 'servant', the Earl St. Maur's eldest offspring?"---"Mohamed's grandson investigates"]

MANCHESTER, UNITED KINGDOM, February 1, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In 1979, Joe A A Silmon-Monerri (a.k.a. "Joe Silmon"), linguist/lexicographer/author/ex-Jazzman, half-Spanish, born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1937, set out on a pre-"Roots"-style quest to discover the origins of his paternal ancestry (de Weld Silmon). There were many false trails and garbled family hearsay was confusing. The 'Weld' route he followed, proved no connection with that ancient Catholic family in Dorset. The 'Silmon' surname also had deep English roots; yet there was clearly no link with his grandfather, in connection with those two surnames. Apart from references to 'Mohamed' (later William) de Weld Silmon's homeland being Morocco, and mentions of a British Earl and the surnames 'St. Maur' and Cavendish-Bentinck, by relatives, there was little to go on, except that an earl had brought him to England from Tangier. But which earl? It all implied that he had immigrated before his early teens, as a 'personal servant'.

In an effort to hide not only the 'domestic service' stigma but also those stigmata involving 'mixed race' and possible 'illegitimacy', his naturalisation papers had been burnt by an uncle of the author, to ensure that the family could strive for upward social mobility; a difficult task in mostly working class Tyneside. Eventually the author's father and uncles secured apprenticeships in a leading shipyard, yet the eldest broke the mould, becoming an Accountant, at first, at the same shipyard, and later a consular linguist in Bilbao. It could not be done without significant influence. Whose? Why?

In the face of such mixed messages, it was obvious that the answer lay in official records. But one big family clue did emerge. A portrait of a little Moorish boy, aged about 12, complete with red Fez hat, red tunic and gardener's breeches, existed among family memorabilia. Its title read "Bulstrode, 16/4/68" [i.e. 1868] and it had a very unusual signature, still to be deciphered. It consisted of a musical 'G', that stave, and the notes 'C', then 'F' above it, and 'F' one octave higher. It was known by family members that it was painted by someone in a stately home, and that it was a 'pilot' for a larger picture that now hung in another stately home. That, followed by a much bigger clue, Mohamed Weld Silmon's naturalisation Memorial, at the then Public Record Office, at Kew, near London [now the National Archives] produced the necessary information that linked the boy with the family of the Twelfth Duke of Somerset, as the Duchess herself was a referee signatory. Her Grace vouched for 'Mohamed WELD SILMON', as having been in the service of her son, the Earl St. Maur in England and abroad, until the death of the latter [her son] in September 1869.

Over the next three decades, the author decided to write the biography of his grandfather's benefactor, Lord Edward Adolphus Ferdinand St. Maur, son of the Twelfth Duke of Somerset and of Lady Jane Georgiana Sheridan (R.B. Sheridan's granddaughter). "Ferdy" St. Maur proved to be a very interesting subject, while the author always vowed to include a full chapter on Mohamed. St. Maur was a warrior earl, shunning parliamentary duty in favour of participating in wars in Persia, India and Italy. A hero, several times mentioned in Despatches, he nevertheless fought as a mere civilian

volunteer, but always at the centre of the action, and alongside heroic contemporary generals, such as Outram, Campbell and Garibaldi. Ferdy was also a balloonist, back-packing early '007'-styled one-time-spy for Britain, [a code-breaker, a consummate lover](#). He was also the father of two officially recognised love children with one Rosina Swann, a gypsy kitchen maid half his age, who first bore him (in Tangier in 1867) a baby girl who, when married, as Ruth Cavendish-Bentinck, would go on to be a leading suffragist, friend of the Pankhursts, Keir Hardie and George Bernard Shaw and founder of the Cavendish-Bentinck Library for the armies of women who were denied an education. Ruth's recounting of her parents' romantic escapade to Morocco in 1866 led to Shaw's "Pygmalion" and later the film "My Fair Lady". Her brother "Harold", wrote Annals of the Seymours in 1902, with some of which Silmon argues in Volume 2, which is about the true origins of the genuine Seymours.

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