

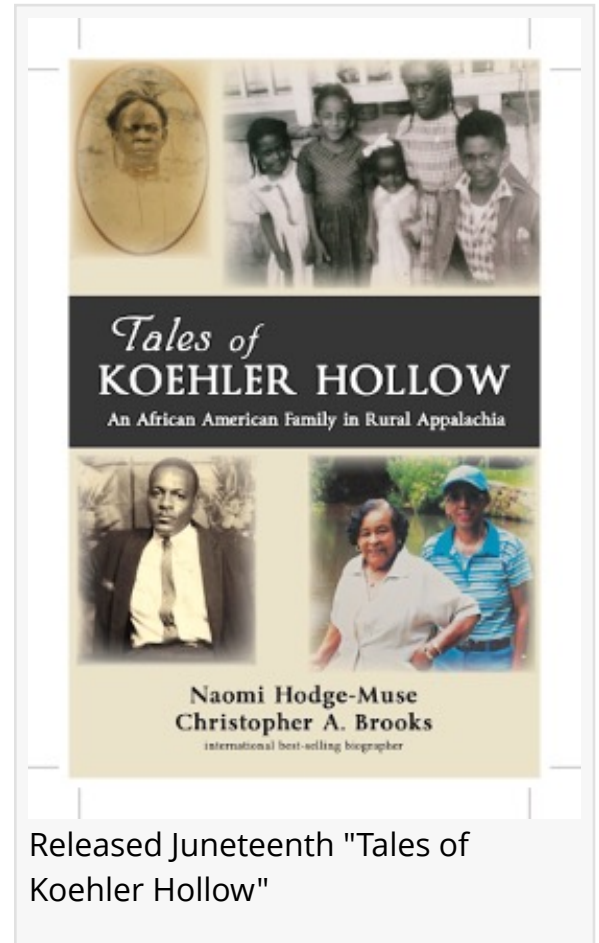
Released Juneteenth - "Tales Of Koehler Hollow: An African American Family in Rural Appalachia"

This is a story of a family in a southern "holler." The chapters are revealing, sometimes sad, occasionally hilarious, but always engaging and reflective.

RICHMOND, VA, UNITED STATES, June 24, 2024
/EINPresswire.com/ -- Juneteenth marked the release of "Tales of Koehler Holler: An African American Family in Rural Appalachia," the true story of a multi-generational African American family in Appalachia from 1850 to the present. The story as told by Naomi Hodge-Muse, was co-written with best-selling international biographer Christopher A. Brooks, a foremost author of numerous publications focusing on the African continental and Diasporan experience. The book is available on www.Unsungvoicesbooks.com and www.Amazon.com.

At the core of "Tales of Koehler Hollow" is the family matriarch Amy Finney (1850 – 1936), a formerly enslaved woman in southwest Virginia. In 1890, Amy purchased land about one mile from the main house in which she had once worked in bondage, thus founding a family legacy that continues to this day. This area outside of Martinsville, Virginia, would come to be known as Koehler, and the valley where Amy's property is, became known as "Koehler Hollow."

Amy's great-great-granddaughter, Naomi Hodge-Muse is the current owner of the Koehler Hollow homestead and its surrounding land, In this book, Naomi recounts family lore from Amy's time as a child to the present—from Reconstruction and the early years of emancipation through the Depression, the 1950s and turbulent 1960s and 70s. This provides the reader with a rare glimpse of life in black Appalachia over the last 150 years. Through the narratives, the characters come alive, building a stable and sustainable life in the holler for their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.



Christopher A. Brooks stated: "Bringing the story of the once enslaved Amy Finney and her family to a larger readership has been a very rewarding experience. It is my mission to tell the sometimes overlooked complexity of the African-derived experience, and this book is an important next step in that mission. I am grateful to Naomi for sharing her family's story."

Naomi Hodge-Muse stated: "What a thrill it was to work with Christopher to bring my family's story to the written word. It is my hope that by telling the experience of my ancestry, readers will have a better appreciation of what it was like for an African American family during those years. And to know we were a family that succeeded despite our circumstances."

Takeaways from "Tales of Koehler Hollow"

- The history of African American enslavement and how the dynamic influenced the family's cultural heritage.
- The historical oppression that African American rural people labored under and how they responded to those challenges/obstacles.
- The culture of gun ownership.
- Navigating family tragedy and how it could trigger community solidarity.
- The gross miscarriage of justice in the infamous Martinsville Seven Case and its impact on the African American community and the Finney family.
- How entering the military provided a safeguard for young men in the era of Jim Crow.
- The proliferation of African American folk remedies.
- The long tradition of bootlegging in the region.
- Avoidance of taboo subjects (e.g., sexuality, HIV, sexual abuse) and the ensuing legacy of shame.
- At the end of this story readers will appreciate the significance of the land, the importance of sacrifice and how Koehler Hollow has become the family's legacy.

About Naomi Hodge-Muse:

Naomi Hodge-Muse has served as the president of the Martinsville chapter of the NAACP, and Voter's League and was appointed by two Virginia Governors to the New College Institute Board of Directors. Hodge-Muse continues a family tradition of community activism and leadership in the Commonwealth, which has included detailed historical research. She is a proud graduate of Virginia Union University. "Tales of Koehler Hollow" is her family's story and a history of the African American experience in Appalachia over the past 150+ years. Tales of Koehler Hollow is her first book.

About Christopher A. Brooks

Christopher A. Brooks is a professor of anthropology at Virginia Commonwealth University. He has produced numerous award-winning publications focusing on the African continental and diasporan experience. Brooks, an internationally recognized biographer, has authored a series of books exploring the HIV pandemic in Africa and America. He is also the author of "Roland Hayes: The Legacy of an American Tenor" (with Robert Sims) and "I Never Walked Alone," with the late great opera singer Shirley Verrett.

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