



SYNCOATED NOTES #14

A Sedalia Convention & Visitor's Bureau Blog

By L.C. Melton (May 25, 2016)

SEDALIA, Tennessee

As I was about to head down the East Coast, I stumbled upon another inland Sedalia, this time in Tennessee. I found it hiding in Hancock County nestled in a crotch just east of Wallen's Ridge about an hour east of the Cumberland Gap right on the Virginia state line.

According to U.S. Post Office records, New Sedalia had its own post office from 1875 until 1895 however, it gained rural route service in 1903 apparently out of Sneedville.¹ There are no signs of it on maps today.

A fascinating factoid about this Sedalia is that it was known for the Melungeon people who had settled there. The encyclopedia defines this group as of mixed European, African and Native American lineage. They were an often maligned people dealt with more like Native Americans were in the early 19th century than European immigrants. Their children were sent to the state mandated Vardy Community School in the 20th century which is now on the National Register of Historic Places. Since these students were multi-racial they weren't eligible to attend white schools.² In that remote part of Appalachia, schools weren't any too common even for white students.

I found no place name information on this Sedalia but the added "New" would indicate it was probably named for the Virginia town on up the old Wilderness Road and that also probably goes back to the 1860 Missouri Sedalia. What if any significance the name had for the Melungeon residents is a mystery.

¹ East Tennessee Post Offices;

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tnmcm2/EastTennesseePostOffices.html>

² Hancock County, Tennessee;

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hancock_County,_Tennessee