## The Interview with Kemi Price – continued

I think everyone has a need to find a sense of community and connection. I began researching my family history as a teenager. My Scottish great-great grandfather was Thomas Patrick Mowitt, who came to the US in 1854. He was smart, hardworking and determined. He was a fascinating person who literally pulled himself up by his bootstraps to become the wealthiest person in the community. I would like to think I inherited his "can do" attitude, which served me well through the ardors of medical school and residency.

*Scots are known to be practical, stubborn, proud but resourceful. Tell me a little of your Scottish roots, family history and how you became a member of SASLA*

I already mentioned Thomas Patrick Mowitt. His family moved to the United States after two of their young children died. Most of the family stayed in upper New York State, where their descendants live to this day. Thomas and his brother William headed west to Illinois, to make their fortunes. Of the two, only Thomas was successful. He joined the Union Army during the Civil War. Afterwards, he married and then became a silent partner in the local coal mine. That's how he made his fortune.

My other Scottish roots are with my father's family, Curry (Currie). They have been in the US since the 1700s. The Curry family have lived in the community I grew up in since the mid 1800s, and made their fortune as wealthy landowners. Ellsworth Curry married Martha Mowitt, and the rest is history.

I really admire the tenacity and dedication it took for these families to succeed in a new country. I love researching Scottish history and everything Scotland. Joining SASLA to help further education and traditions was a natural extension.

*I understand that one of your hobbies is genetic genealogy. I wonder if you could explain what that is to our non-science based members. Has this*

*expanded your opportunity to apply your medical skills both inside clinical medicine and perhaps even in forensic medicine.*

Genetic genealogy uses shared DNA measurements to predict how an individual might be related to others. This was originally used by adoptees searching for their birth parents, or people trying to identify a parent or grandparent. In 2018, history was made when Barbara Rae-Venter was approached by detectives looking for the Golden State Killer.

The process often involves building very large family trees to find where family trees connect. In the Golden State Killer case, I understand that several trees containing thousands of people were constructed before he was identified. In essence, it's a huge logic puzzle.

Genetic genealogy doesn't have anything to do with medicine. In fact, I use it as a distraction from medicine. For the last 8 years, it has been my "strange little hobby." I started out looking to identify a g-g-g-grandfather in my family tree. Since then, I've worked as a volunteer to help others, and found many parents, grandparents, and even united long lost siblings. It's a real rush to solve these puzzles. Finding these answers is usually a joyful experience for the people I'm helping.

*Awesome and fascinating ! Thanks for correcting my false impression that genetic genealogy was related to medicine. I could see how an individual with an analytic mind driven by curiosity could become so engaged in the field. I am sure this has led you into some fascinating experiences.*

Yes, absolutely! The most exciting genetic genealogy case I ever worked on was in 2019. I was in the process of helping a family friend identify his paternal grandfather. The friend uploaded his DNA profile to GEDMATCH to facilitate the search. Since my email was associated with the DNA profile, I was contacted by an investigator in New Mexico who was working on a cold case. It turned out the family friend was the closest genetic match (third cousin) to the unknown perpetrator. I responded to the email, and then received a phone call from the investigator. After answering questions about my experience with genetic genealogy, I was asked if I would be willing to help with the case.

It took 3 months, and building a tree containing over 6500 individuals to finally identify two brothers as potential suspects. I contacted the investigator, who found that one of the brothers had been adopted as an infant, and was living 100 yards away from the crime scene. Detectives followed the suspect, and retrieved a discarded coffee cup. The DNA on the cup matched the DNA of the unknown perpetrator.

*Again, thanks for that! Do you have any last words to guide the Society as it formulates its vision for the future - a future that rests upon the shoulders of today's youth who must move forward, influenced by the burden of todays crises. Considered from the standpoint of history, these challenges are metaphorically not that much different than those of the evolutionary years of Scotland itself!*

My advice is the same that I gave my own children. Set your goals, make your plans on how to achieve them, and don't give up. That's what I learned from stories about my Scottish ancestors. I remember one of my ancestors, James Curry moved to Illinois from Indiana after the death of their 5 year old son. They had only lived in Indiana for a few years, but couldn't stand the thought of staying there after the death of their child. James and his wife Elizabeth arrived in Illinois with very little in material possessions. James worked hard, and was soon the proprietor of a small store. He saved his money and bought property in the area. James eventually became a well to do land owner.
I wish everyone had inspiration like this. To me examples of hard work and education are an important part of my Scottish heritage. I can think of no better recommendation for SASLA in its efforts to promote and preserve Scottish culture.

*Great advice Kemi. Intention, attention and persistent effort are indeed the key ingredients to achievement. And you are indeed an excellent example of that!*