



# **The Fiddler on Pantico Run: An African Warrior, His White Descendants, A Search for Family**

*Joe Mozingo*

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**In this gorgeously written and “vividly fascinating” (*Elle*) account, a prize-winning journalist digs deep into his ancestry looking for the origins of his unusual last name and discovers that he comes from one of America’s earliest mixed-race families.**

“My dad’s family was a mystery,” writes journalist Joe Mozingo, having grown up with only rumors about where his father’s family was from—Italy, France, the Basque Country. But when a college professor told the blue-eyed Californian that his family name may have come from sub-Saharan Africa, Mozingo set out on an epic journey to uncover the truth. He soon discovered that all Mozingos in America, including his father’s line, appeared to have descended from a black man named Edward Mozingo who was brought to America as a slave in 1644 and, after winning his freedom twenty-eight years later, became a tenant tobacco farmer, married a white woman, and fathered one of the country’s earliest mixed-race family lineages.

Tugging at the buried thread of his origins, Joe Mozingo has unearthed a saga that encompasses the full sweep of America’s history and lays bare the country’s tortured and paradoxical experience with race. Haunting and beautiful, Mozingo’s memoir paints a world where the lines based on color are both illusory and life altering. He traces his family line from the ravages of the slave trade to the mixed-race society of colonial Virginia and through the brutal imposition of racial laws.

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