Hosted by the Department of Sociology
The Social Life of DNA: racial reconciliation and institutional morality

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Thursday 26 October, 6.30-8pm, OLD THEATRE, OLD BUILDING
No Ticket Required
The Social Life of DNA: Racial Reconciliation and Institutional Morality

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2017 British Journal of Sociology Lecture
DNA Offers Link to Black History

By CAREY GOLDBERG  AUG. 28, 2000

Add to the list of the wonders of DNA: the ability, in the not-so-distant future, to help African-Americans figure out where their ancestors probably came from before they were enslaved.

In Boston this fall, some 300 African-American schoolchildren are to be sent home with swabs to gather DNA samples from inside the mouths of their family members, part of a nascent project that a local molecular biologist hopes to extend to North Carolina and other sites with longstanding African-American populations.

At Howard University in Washington, a geneticist announced this spring that he would offer DNA analysis, possibly as early as this summer, to African-Americans seeking their ancestors' homelands, at $200 or $300 per test. He has since withdrawn that price and moved back his starting date to next year.
Bio Science:

Genetic Genealogy Testing and the Pursuit of African Ancestry

Alondra Nelson

[O]ur biographies are written, at least in part, in terms of structural chemistry. (Lock, 2005)

The decoding of the human genome precipitated a change of paradigms in genetics research, from an emphasis on what then president Bill Clinton, in his announcement of this scientific achievement, described as ‘our common humanity’ (White House, 2000) to a concern with molecular-level differences among individuals and groups. This shift in research focus from lumping to splitting spurred ongoing disagreements among scholars in the
the social life of things
Appadurai 1988

it is by following “the social life of things,” “things-in-motion” that we are able to “illuminate their human and social context”
account for the social dimensions of new biomedical technologies” through thick description and “following around”
the social life of money
Dodd 2014

a process, not a thing...value derives from the dynamic, ever-changing, and often contested social relations that sustain its circulation
the social life of DNA

- “spillover” between sites of genetic analysis, from genealogical uses to other domains (e.g., forensic or medical) and back again

- multiple uses to which one type of genetic analysis is put (e.g., genetic ancestry testing)
Venture Smith
(1729-1805)
NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF VENTURE, A NATIVE OF AFRICA. But resident above sixty years in the United States of America.
sites and practices in which genetic analysis is put to the task of resolving controversies or answering questions about the past (e.g. La Asociación Civil Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo)
Mary-Claire King; Grandmothers of the May Plaza (La Asociación Civil Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo)
reconciliation projects

e.g., resolution of the injuries produced by racial slavery is sought through the employ of genetic analysis
Scientific Correspondence


Jefferson fathered slave's last child

Eugene A. Foster¹, M. A. Jobling², P. G. Taylor², P. Donnelly³, P. de Knijff⁴, Rene Mieremet⁵, T. Zerjal⁶ & C. Tyler-Smith⁵

There is a long-standing historical controversy over the question of US President Thomas Jefferson's paternity of the children of Sally Hemings, one of his slaves¹,⁴. To throw some scientific light on the dispute, we have compared Y-chromosomal DNA haplotypes from male-line descendants of Field Jefferson, a paternal uncle of Thomas Jefferson, with those of male-line descendants of Thomas Woodson, Sally Hemings' putative first son, and of Eston Hemings Jefferson, her last son. The molecular findings fail to support the belief that Thomas Jefferson was Thomas Woodson's father, but provide evidence that he was the biological father of Eston Hemings Jefferson.

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African Ancestry, Inc.

CERTIFICATE OF ANCESTRY

African Ancestry hereby certifies that

Albert Sampson

shares Mammal Genetic Ancestry with

the Témne people in Sierra Leone

Based on a MatchClan™ analysis performed on

May 7, 2004

Rike Kettle

Scientific Director

African Ancestry
Incorporated
The Science and Business of Genetic Ancestry Testing

Deborah A. Bolnick,1* Duana Fullwiley,2 Troy Duster,3,4 Richard S. Cooper,5 Joan H. Fujimura,6
Jonathan Kahn,7 Jay S. Kaufman,8 Jonathan Marks,9 Ann Morning,3 Alondra Nelson,10 Pilar
Ossorio,11 Jenny Reardon,12 Susan M. Reverby,13 Kimberly TallBear14,15

At least two dozen companies now market “genetic ancestry tests” to help consumers reconstruct their family histories and determine the geographic origins of their ancestors. More than 460,000 people have purchased these tests over the past 6 years (1), and public interest is still skyrocketing (1–4). Some scientists support this enterprise because it makes genetics accessible and relevant; others view it with indifference, seeing the tests as merely “recreational.” However, both scientists and consumers should be aware that commercially available tests of genetic ancestry have significant scientific limitations, but are serious matters for many test-takers.

The Impact of “Recreational Genetics”

Although genetic ancestry testing is often described as “recreational genetics,” many consumers do not take these tests lightly. Each test costs $100 to $900, and consumers often have deep personal reasons for purchasing these products. Many individuals have a personal or family history of diseases that are more common in particular geographic regions. The presence of these conditions in their ancestry may be motivating factors for purchasing the test. Others are drawn to the sense of connection to their ancestral roots or to the promise of new information about their cultural and linguistic heritage. Another group of individuals use these tests to explore the possibility of Native American ancestry. Many individuals of African descent use these tests to locate their African communities. Other Americans have taken the tests in hope of obtaining Native American tribal affiliation (and benefits like financial support, housing, education, health care, and affirmation of identity) or to challenge tribal membership decisions (7).

Limitations

It is important to understand what these tests can and cannot determine. Most tests fall into two categories. Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) tests sequence the hypervariable region of the maternally inherited mitochondrial genome. Y-chromosome tests analyze short tandem repeats and/or single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) in the paternally inherited X-chroma-
the “sara”: a reconciliation project
TO BE SOLD on board the
Ship Bance-yland, on Tuesday the 6th
of May next, at Ashley-Ferry; a choice
cargo of about 250 fine healthy
NEGROES,
just arrived from the
Windward & Rice Coast.
—The utmost care has
already been taken, and
shall be continued, to keep them free from
the least danger of being infected with the
SMALL-POX, no boat having been on
board, and all other communication with
people from Charles-Town prevented.
Austin, Laurens, & Appleby.

N. B. Full one Half of the above Negroes have had the
SMALL-POX in their own Country.
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
For the
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

DEADRIA FARMER-PAELLMANN,

On behalf of herself
and all other persons
similarly situated,

PLAINTIFF,

v.

FLEETBOSTON FINANCIAL CORPORATION, AETNA
INS., CSX, and THEIR PREDECESSORS, successors
and/or assigns, and CORPORATE DOES NOS. 1-1000,

DEFENDANTS.

Plaintiffs, on behalf of themselves and all other persons similarly situated, state, upon
information and belief, as follows:

INTRODUCTION, JURISDICTION AND VENUE

Introduction

1. Over 8,000,000 Africans and their descendants were enslaved in the United States
from 1619 to 1865. The practice of slavery constituted an "immoral and inhumane deprivation
of Africans’ life, liberty, African citizenship rights, cultural heritage" and it further deprived
them of the fruits of their own labor.
Companies Are Sued for Slave Reparations

By ROBERT F. WORTH  MARCH 27, 2002

Citing the persisting legacy of slavery, a Manhattan woman yesterday filed what appears to be the first class-action lawsuit that seeks compensation from United States companies for allegedly profiting from the slave trade.

The suit was filed in federal court in Brooklyn in behalf of all living descendants of slaves in this country. It seeks unspecified damages from the FleetBoston Financial Corporation, Aetna Inc. and the CSX Corporation, stating that they or their predecessor companies profited from slave labor. Lawyers said the suit would be followed in coming weeks by similar ones against a number of other corporations in courts around the country, including one in New Jersey.
A federal judge in Chicago dismissed a suit by descendants of slaves from across the country that sought reparations from corporations that they contend profited from slavery. The judge, Charles R. Norgle of Federal District Court, said the plaintiffs had shown no clear link between them and the companies. The suit combined smaller suits from courts around the country as part of a movement calling for millions of dollars in reparations for slavery from 18 companies, including railroads, banks and cigarette makers.
January 2004 dismissal:

“[the Plaintiffs cannot establish a personal injury sufficient to confer standing by merely alleging some genealogical relationship to African-Americans held in slavery over one-hundred, two-hundred, or three-hundred years ago.”
Outside the U.S. Court of Appeals (Chicago)
Illinois: Court Rejects Slave Reparation Claims

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS   DEC. 14, 2006

A federal appeals court rejected most claims by slave descendants that they deserve reparations from some of the nation’s biggest insurers, banks and transportation companies. The panel affirmed a lower-court ruling that the plaintiffs had no standing to sue for reparations based on injustices suffered by their ancestors and that the statute of limitations ran out more than a century ago. But the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, in Chicago, kept alive a part of the suit that claims corporations may be guilty of consumer fraud if they hid past ties to slavery.
March 2005 dismissal:

“Genetic mapping, or DNA testing, ... alone is insufficient to provide a decisive link to a homeland.“
PECULIAR INSTITUTIONS

Browne University looks at the slave traders in its past.

BY FRANCIS FITZGERALD

On May 14, 1770, John Browne had the foundation stone for Rhode Island College, on a hill overlooking Providence and Narragansett Bay. According to the Provost's grant, "a number of Gentlemen, Friends to the Institution," attended the ceremony, and, in addition, he, Browne, moved them to purchase. He and his brother—Nicholas, Joseph, and Moses—had a desire to celebrate that day. All four had worked hard to establish the college, later known as Brown University.

The Browns themselves had no formal education. They were Baptists—their great-grandfather, Chief Brown, had been baptized by Roger Williams soon after Browns arrived in Providence, in 1630—and until their generation, Brown had organized Biblical and classical learning in their own homes. According to the report of a rival college, the Browns did not teach their children to read.
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation
“This is not a disembodied group of people, who are nameless and faceless...These are real people with real names and real descendants.” –Richard Cellini in *The New York Times*
Seeking the GU 272

Judy Riffel

Patricia Bayonne-Johnson
Isaac Hawkins (1773 - aft. 1838)

Isaac Hawkins
Born 1773 in Maryland
Son of [father unknown] and [mother unknown]
[sibling(s) unknown]
[spouse(s) unknown]
Father of Patrick Hawkins
Died after 1838 in Louisiana, USA

Profile manager: Denys Baham [send private message]
Hawkins-6582 created 5 Nov 2016 | Last modified 2 May 2017
This page has been accessed 303 times.

Categories: Georgetown University Slaves | Louisiana Slaves | Maryland Slaves | Louisiana Families.

Isaac Hawkins lived in Louisiana.
Join: Louisiana Families Project
Discuss: LOUISIANA

Biography
Isaac was born in 1773. Isaac Hawkins was sold by Georgetown University and shipped to Louisiana in 1838.

Sources
People sold by Thomas Mulledy in 1838 Adapted from the Jesuit Plantation Project, Georgetown University From "List of slaves on each estate to be sold" in Box 40, Folder 10, Maryland Province Archives

DNA Connections
It may be possible to confirm family relationships with Isaac by comparing test results with other carriers of his Y-chromosome or his mother's mitochondrial DNA. However, there are no known yDNA or mtDNA test-takers in his direct paternal or maternal line. It is likely that these autosomal DNA test-takers will share DNA with Isaac:

- Stephanie (Arbuckle) White: 23andMe, GEDmatch M093772
- Angela (Arbuckle) Guy: AncestryDNA, GEDmatch A973388, Ancestry member AA

Have you taken a DNA test for genealogy? If so, login to add it. If not, see our friends at Family Tree DNA.

Images: 1
Georgetown University Slave List 1838
Earlene Campbell-Coleman, great-great-great-granddaughter of Frank Campbell
Georgetown Will Offer An Edge In Admissions To Descendants Of Slaves

September 1, 2016 · 10:13 AM ET

CAMILA DOMONOSKE

Patricia Bayonne-Johnson holds a photo of her great-grandparents and their son. The retired science teacher discovered that some of her ancestors were sold by the Jesuits of the Maryland Province in 1838, to pay off Georgetown University's massive debt.
Liturgy of “remembrance, contrition and hope”
Moral economies... are connected in the daily activities of institutions through the values and affects which crystallize around social issues and the responses that are given in concrete situations

-At the Heart of the State, Didier Fassin
THE SOCIAL LIFE OF DNA
RACE, REPARATIONS, AND RECONCILIATION AFTER THE GENOME

Alondra Nelson

“Eye-opening, provocative, and deeply humane.”
—Isabel Wilkerson