

## Dan Smith Research Project: Phase 2

14 June 2022

### OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research project is to use DNA and genealogical records to determine the biological mother of Dan Smith, who was born on 5 February 1857 in Virginia and died on 9 January 1923 in Dalton, Whitfield, Georgia. Dan Smith married twice: first to Emma Cobb on 18 October 1874 in Dalton, Whitfield, Georgia, and then to Mary Famber on 21 December 1890, also in Dalton. DNA evidence supports the father of Dan Smith was Jaquelin Marshall Meredith, an Episcopalian reverend who lived in Fauquier and Stafford County, Virginia, in the 1850s.

### LIMITATIONS

- Multiple descendants of Dan Smith took autosomal DNA tests, and their DNA was utilized for this research project. The test takers are two to three generations away from the research subject, making many of the DNA matches applicable to this project third to fourth cousins. Third to fourth cousins may not share very much DNA with the test-takers, which can make verifying the exact relationship between a DNA match and the test-takers difficult.
- The community of the research subject also experienced pedigree collapse, where multiple family lines intersect, so there may be multiple most recent common ancestors (MRCAs) with the test takers. Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) is not useful in this case as it is not an unbroken maternal line, and Y-DNA is not useful in this case as it is not an unbroken paternal line.
- This project was limited to about 20 hours.
- This project's primary analysis used the DNA matches database from *Ancestry.com*.
- When attempting to view segment data through GEDmatch, it was discovered that very few matches from the family line of interest had transferred DNA to GEDmatch; therefore, segment data of key matches were unavailable.

- A record of interest for this project, William Stribling's ledger, is currently unavailable to view online. Until the ledger is available online, this will have to be viewed in person at the African American Historical Association of Fauquier County, Virginia.
- Since Dan Smith was born about five years before the Civil War, none of the proposed enslavers for him died before the Civil War; therefore, he would not be listed in their wills.

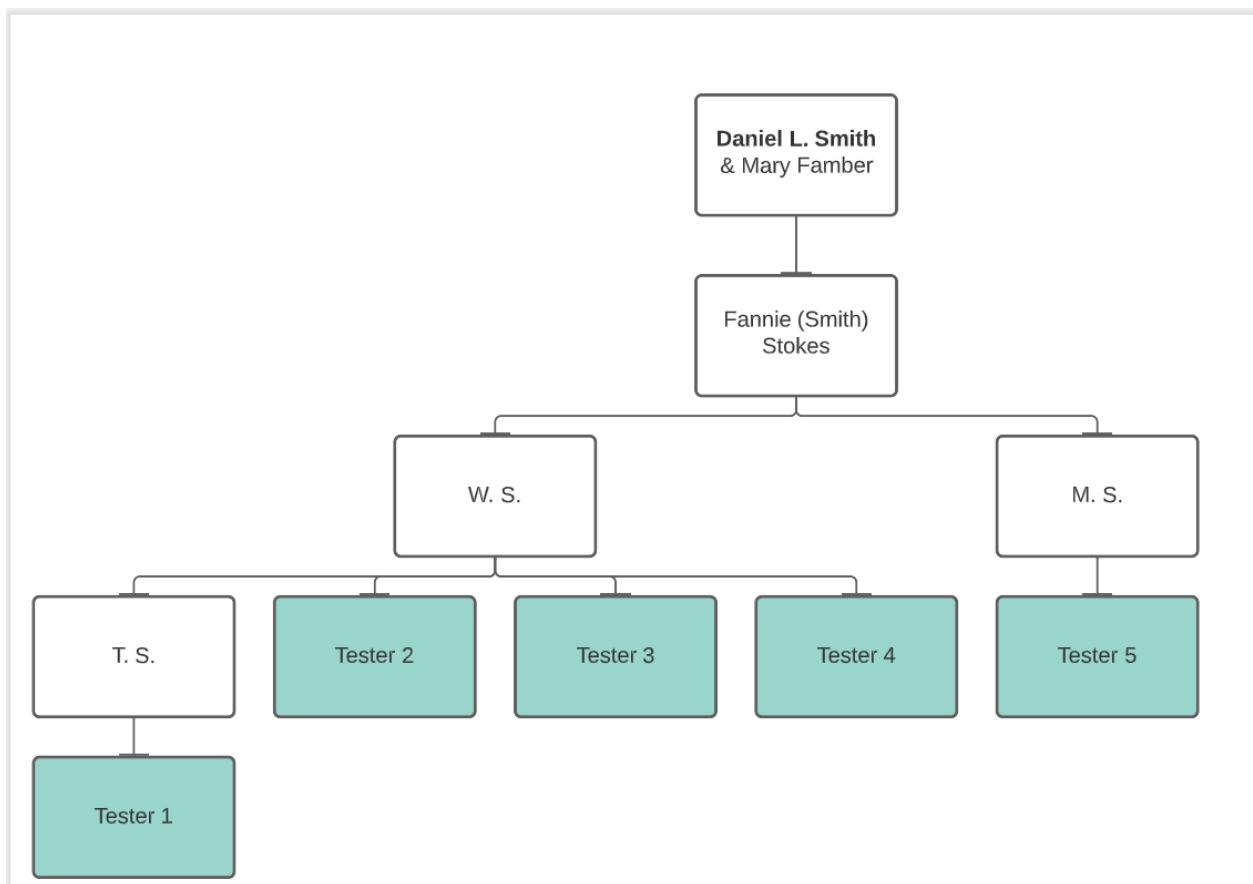
## RESULTS SUMMARY

- Hypothesized that Dan Smith was an enslaved person on the plantation of Dr. Robert Stribling in Fauquier County, Virginia.
- Reviewed all evidence of Jaquelin Marshall Meredith's early life and where he would have been during the conceptions of George Robinson and Dan Smith.
- Estimated the birth years of George Robinson and Dan Smith and used this information to decide where Jaquelin Marshall Meredith would have been during the times of their conceptions.
- Confirmed notes from another researcher that Caroline Robinson was enslaved by Dr. Robert Stribling.
- Examined other slaves of Robert Stribling as possible mothers of Dan Smith.
- Created subclusters of genetic networks to find the DNA matches most likely descending from Dan Smith's mother.
- Discussed possible future avenues for research.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This is the second phase of a research project to discover Dan Smith's parents. Before the research for the first phase of this project, the client provided multiple documents concerning Dan Smith. These documents report multiple birth years for Dan ranging from 1851 to 1860 with a consistent birthplace of Virginia. No further information on a more specific Virginia birthplace for Dan was provided in the previously conducted research. Reviewing genealogical records previously gathered on Dan Smith showed that little was known about his parents, with the only clue being that they were most likely from Virginia.

The test-takers for this DNA project were Dan Smith's great-great-granddaughter, and four of Dan Smith's great-granddaughters. These descendants took autosomal DNA tests through *Ancestry.com*. Figure 1 shows the test takers and their relationships to Dan Smith.



**Figure 1. Test-Takers' Relationships to Dan Smith**

More genealogical records were searched in the hope of finding more information on Dan's parents, but no further hints were found. As such, the DNA of five of Dan's descendants was used to determine Dan Smith's parents. Creating a network graph of the DNA matches of Tester 2 showed that descendants of Dan Smith shared DNA with a group of descendants from George Robinson and Elmira Pinkard. Previous DNA research projects done by descendants of George Robinson had discovered that George Robinson seemed to be the son of a white man named Jaquelin Marshall Meredith.<sup>1</sup>

Analyzing the amount of shared DNA between Dan Smith descendants and George Robinson descendants showed it is close to the average amount of DNA expected if George

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<sup>1</sup> Private Member Trees, details kept private; database, Ancestry (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 3 September 2021); sourced data for family of George Robinson.

Robinson and Dan Smith were half-brothers. Searching for the parents of George Robinson through genealogical records can further test the hypothesis that George Robinson was the half-brother of Dan Smith.

Dan Smith's descendants also shared DNA with other descendants of Jaquelin Marshall Meredith. This suggested that Dan Smith was also the son of Jaquelin Marshall Meredith, though most likely with a different mother than George Robinson, the hypothesized half-brother.

Jaquelin Marshall Meredith lived most of his life in Fauquier County, Virginia, but married and raised a family in the adjacent county of Stafford. Tax records show he did own slaves, but the specifics about these slaves is unknown. This report will use documentary and genetic genealogy to explore the possibility of Dan Smith being born in Fauquier or Stafford County, Virginia, to a slave of Jaquelin Marshall Meredith or a slave of one of Jaquelin's associates.

## HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis for this research report is that the mother of Dan Smith was an enslaved woman on the plantation of Dr. Robert Stribling in Fauquier County, Virginia. Family stories and authored sources have placed Jaquelin Marshall Meredith staying with the Striblings around the time of Dan Smith's conception. Jaquelin Marshall Meredith also had a child with Caroline Robinson, another enslaved woman on the Stribling plantation.

The conceptions of Dan Smith and George Robinson seem to have taken place within six months of each other, and therefore it is likely they happened around the same geographic area. In April 1857, between the two conceptions of Dan Smith and George Robinson, Jaquelin's mother, Mary Meredith, wrote him a letter chastising him for pleasure seeking.<sup>2</sup> About a year later, in 1858, Jaquelin wrote a letter to his then fiancé, Ellen Bankhead, about how difficult the temptations of men are.<sup>3</sup> In 1860, Jaquelin's wife alluded to an incident which questioned Jaquelin's character.

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<sup>2</sup> Private email held by author.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen Bankhead, Edgemont, Virginia, to Jaquelin Marshall Meredith, 9 October 1857, personal letter privately held by Author; "Jaquelin Marshall Meredith Papers, 1852-1934," Mss1 M5415 b 18-19 and 28-37, images 20-21 of 27, Meredith Family Collection; citing Virginia Museum of History & Culture, Richmond, Virginia. **Document 1**

"Sorry to see from it that you brood over the little affair which occurred when you were last down. You explained very clearly what your intentions were, and I do appreciate the motive and hope, but fear it will be too visionary to be accomplished. I know you do father injustice to suppose that he for an instant thought you capable of so mean a transaction as you mentioned. Indeed, if I could harbor such a suspicion against you, how could I love or honor you?"<sup>4</sup>

Later that same year, Ellen wrote to Jaquelin that he "must get writing from Dr. Stribling promising never to molest any property that we may ever have in possession, and before he does it [Father] says he will then give us the rest of our share."<sup>5</sup> The rest of the letter makes it clear that the "share" of her father's estate that she referred to was her father's slaves. This information seems to lead to a scandal that occurred with Jaquelin Marshall Meredith and the property of Dr. Stribling. It could be referring to Caroline Robinson, but this also may have been where Dan Smith's mother lived. Diving into the documentary research and verifying with DNA tools will hopefully reveal the identity of Dan Smith's mother.

## JAQUELIN MARSHALL MEREDITH'S BEGINNINGS

Jaquelin Marshall Meredith was born on 16 March 1835 in Hanover County, Virginia.<sup>6</sup> Jaquelin's father, Reuben Meredith, died when Jaquelin was only five years old.<sup>7</sup> Reuben Meredith's will, probated in Henrico County, Virginia, gave his entire estate to his wife, Mary Meredith.<sup>8</sup> Tax

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<sup>4</sup> Ellen Bankhead Meredith, Somerset, Virginia, to Jaquelin Marshall Meredith, 17 April 1860, personal letter privately held by Author; "Jaquelin Marshall Meredith Papers, 1852-1934," Mss1 M5415 b 18-19 and 28-37, images 10-11 of 27, Meredith Family Collection; citing Virginia Museum of History & Culture, Richmond, Virginia. **Document 2**

<sup>5</sup> Ellen Bankhead Meredith, Somerset, Virginia, to Jaquelin Marshall Meredith, 2 December 1860, personal letter privately held by Author; "Jaquelin Marshall Meredith Papers, 1852-1934," Mss1 M5415 b 18-19 and 28-37, images 24-26 of 27, Meredith Family Collection; citing Virginia Museum of History & Culture, Richmond, Virginia. **Document 3**

<sup>6</sup> "Virginia, Birth Certificates, 1912-1913," Jaquelin Marshall Meredith, 16 March 1835, Hanover County, Virginia; database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 4 May 2022), image #10 of 657; citing FHL microfilm #101019863. **Document 4**

<sup>7</sup> *Find A Grave*, memorial page for Reuben Meredith (24 May 1791-20 August 1840); database with images ([www.findagrave.com/memorial/39893568](http://www.findagrave.com/memorial/39893568): accessed 3 May 2022), Find A Grave Memorial #39893568; citing Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Richmond City County, Virginia; photo included.

<sup>8</sup> "Virginia, U.S. Wills and Probate Records, 1652-1900", Henrico County, Virginia, Mixed Records, Vol. 10-11, 1835-1853, entry for Reuben Meredith's will, 10 May 1839; digitized microfilm images, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 4 May 2022), image number 275; citing Virginia, County, Districts, and Probate Courts. **Document 5**

records show the Estate of Reuben Meredith remained in Henrico County, Virginia, until 1844.<sup>9</sup> However, after 1844, the Meredith family does not clearly appear in the records until 1860. What happened to them?

Jaquelin Marshall Meredith's delayed birth certificate shows that his mother, Mary Letitia Clarkson, was born in Fauquier County, Virginia.<sup>10</sup> Unsourced notes from prior researchers claimed that:

"Jaquelin Meredith and his brother Steptoe were in Fauquier County, Virginia, sometime around or after their father died (abt 1850) and lived with the Marshalls and the Striblings. These were the families of Jaquelin's aunts on his mother's side. He was with the Striblings around the late 1850s."<sup>11</sup>

The marriage records of the Merediths, Striblings, and Marshalls show all the women with the maiden name of Clarkson.<sup>12</sup> In a letter between Robert Stribling Jr. and Jaquelin Marshall

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<sup>9</sup> Henrico County, Virginia, "Personal Property Tax Lists, 1831-1844," image 559 of 830, entry for Reuben Meredith, 1840, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 6 August 2021); citing FHL microfilm 2024585.

**Document 6**

Henrico County, Virginia, "Personal Property Tax Lists, 1831-1844," image 638 of 830, entry for Reuben Meredith Est, 1841, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 6 August 2021); citing FHL microfilm 2024585.

**Document 7**

Henrico County, Virginia, "Personal Property Tax Lists, 1831-1844," image 671 of 830, entry for Reuben Meredith Est, 1842, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 6 August 2021); citing FHL microfilm 2024585.

**Document 8**

Henrico County, Virginia, "Personal Property Tax Lists, 1831-1844," image 753 of 830, entry for Reuben Meredith Est, 1843, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 6 August 2021); citing FHL microfilm 8575073.

**Document 9**

Henrico County, Virginia, "Personal Property Tax Lists, 1831-1844," image 784 of 830, entry for Reuben Meredith Est, 1844, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 6 August 2021); citing FHL microfilm 8575073.

**Document 10**

Searched for "Meredith" In Henrico County, Virginia, "Personal Property Tax Lists, 1845-1850,"; NIL.

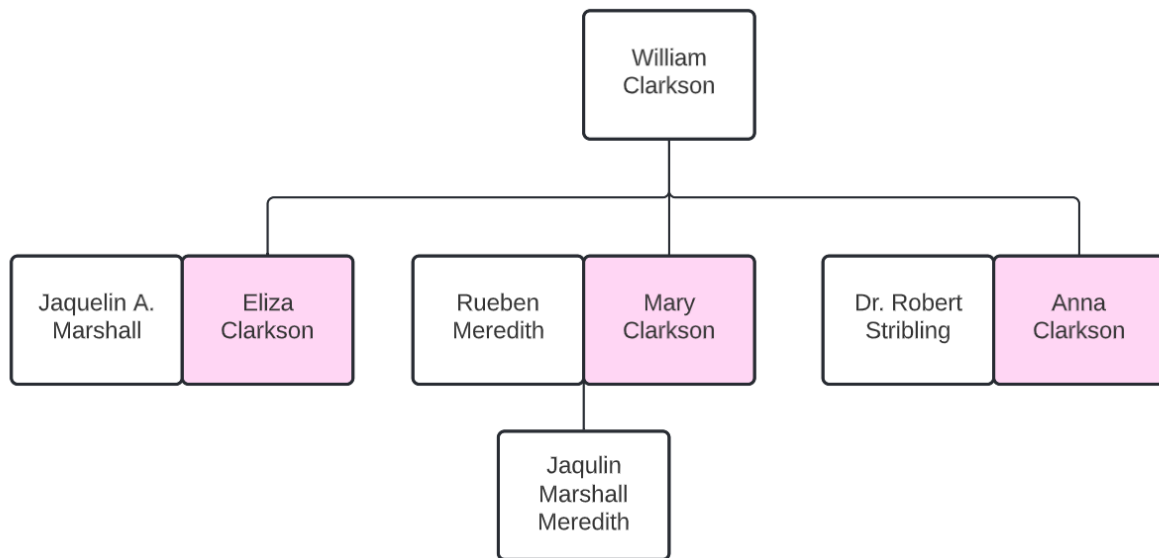
<sup>10</sup> "Virginia, Birth Certificates, 1912-1913," Jacquelin Marshall Meredith, 16 March 1835, Hanover County, Virginia; database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 4 May 2022), image #10 of 657; citing FHL microfilm #101019863. **Document 4**

<sup>11</sup> Private email held by author.

<sup>12</sup> "Virginia Marriages, 1785-1940," Jacquelin A. Marshall & Eliza L. L. Clarkson, 13 January 1819, Fauquier County, Virginia; database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 8 May 2022); citing FHL microfilm #007578973.

"Virginia Marriages, 1785-1940," Robert M. Stribling & Caroline Clarkson, 13 January 1819, Fauquier County, Virginia; database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 8 May 2022); citing FHL microfilm #007578973.

Meredith, Robert Jr. closes the letter by signing, "write soon to your friend and cousin."<sup>13</sup> This evidence supports that Jaquelin Marshall Meredith was most likely cousins with the Stribling family. As for the Marshalls, Jaquelin Marshall Meredith's aunt, Eliza Clarkson, married Jaquelin A. Marshall.<sup>14</sup> Mary (Clarkson) Meredith named her son Jaquelin Marshall Meredith, most likely after her brother-in-law (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Relationships between the Merediths, Striblings, and Marshalls**

The first direct record identified for Jaquelin Marshall Meredith after his father's estate in the 1844 tax record is in 1857, when an enslaved woman, owned by Jaquelin Marshall Meredith, was

"Virginia Marriages, 1785-1940," Reuben Marshall & Mary L. Clarkson, 28 June 1819, Fauquier County, Virginia; database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 8 May 2022); citing FHL microfilm #007578973.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Stribling Jr., Itward, Virginia, to Jaquelin Marshall Meredith, 15 April 1866, personal letter privately held by Author; "Jaquelin Marshall Meredith Papers, 1852-1934," Mss1 M5415 b, Stribling Letters, images 2-3 of 13, Meredith Family Collection; citing Virginia Museum of History & Culture, Richmond, Virginia. **Document 11**

<sup>14</sup> "Virginia Marriages, 1785-1940," Jaquelin A. Marshall & Eliza L. L. Clarkson, 13 January 1819, Fauquier County, Virginia; database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 8 May 2022); citing FHL microfilm #007578973.

born in Stafford County, Virginia.<sup>15</sup> Therefore the understood timeline of Jaquelin Marshall Meredith's whereabouts during this time are:

- 1835** Born in Hanover County, Virginia.
- 1840-1844** Lived with family in Henrico County, Virginia.
- 1845-1857** Lived in Fauquier County, Virginia, with his cousins, the Marshalls and Striblings.
- 1857** Found in Stafford County, Virginia, where he later raised his family.

A possible timeline for Jaquelin Marshall Meredith can provide more details in pinpointing where to find Dan Smith's mother.

## THE BIRTHS OF GEORGE ROBINSON AND DAN SMITH

It would be very helpful to confirm the birthdates of George Robinson and Dan Smith, as an estimation for George and Dan's conceptions dates could help put Jaquelin Marshall Meredith in a certain area. This could then lead to identifying a mother for Dan Smith. Unfortunately, enslaved people rarely knew their birthdays. In Frederick Douglass' autobiography he explained:

"I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday. They seldom come nearer to it than planting-time, harvest-time, cherry-time, spring-time, and fall-time."<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, only estimates of the births for George Robinson and Dan Smith can be considered. These estimates can still provide context in locating Dan's mother.

### George Robinson's Birth

Eight sources provide a variety of birthdates for George Robinson. All of these sources have undetermined informants, except for George Robinson's death certificate, where his son, M.M.

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<sup>15</sup> "Birth records (Virginia), 1853-1896; indexes, 1853-1896; indexes, 1853-1899; delayed birth indexes, 1912-1950", Not named, 8 February 1857, Stafford County, Virginia; database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 23 April 2021), image #359 of 646; citing FHL microfilm #004254525. **Document 12**

<sup>16</sup> Annika Neklason, "The Mystery Behind Frederick Douglass's Birthday," (The Atlantic: 2018).



Robinson, filled out the information. The following table shows the different birth dates from each of the sources.

**Table 1. Sources of George Robinson's Birthdate**

Source	Explanation	Birthdate
1870 Census <sup>a</sup>	Age 15; born in VA	Abt 1855
1877 Marriage <sup>b</sup>	Assuming at least age 18 - probably born 1859 or earlier. This marriage year comes from the 1900 census	1859 or earlier
1880 Census <sup>c</sup>	Age 26; born in VA	Abt 1854
1900 Census <sup>d</sup>	Age 42; born in VA; Oct 1857	Oct 1857
1910 Census <sup>e</sup>	Age is illegible; born in VA	////////
1920 Census <sup>f</sup>	Age 60; born in VA	Abt 1860
1930 Census <sup>g</sup>	Age 73; born in VA	Abt 1857
1933 Death <sup>h</sup>	Age 76; born 4 Oct 1857 in Fauquier Co; father unknown; informant his son M. M. Robinson	4 Oct 1857
<p>a. 1870 U.S. Census, Scott, Fauquier, Virginia, population schedule, Upperville Post Office, sheet 85, dwelling 521, family 516, entry for Caroline Robison household; digital image, <i>Ancestry.com</i> (<a href="http://www.ancestry.com">http://www.ancestry.com</a> : accessed 24 July 2021); citing NARA fil M593, roll 1645.</p> <p>b. 1900 U.S. Census, Gainesville, Prince William, Virginia, population schedule, Supervisor's District 8, Enumeration District 80, sheet 10A, dwelling 167, family 167, entry for Geo Robison household; digital image, <i>Ancestry.com</i> (<a href="http://www.ancestry.com">http://www.ancestry.com</a> : accessed 24 July 2021); citing FHL microfilm 1241724.</p> <p>c. 1880 U.S. Census, Marshall, Fauquier, Virginia, population schedule, Supervisor's District 3, Enumeration District 39, sheet 43, dwelling 333, family 337, entry for George Robinson household; digital image, <i>Ancestry.com</i> (<a href="http://www.ancestry.com">http://www.ancestry.com</a> : accessed 24 July 2021); citing NARA microfilm T9, roll 1364.</p> <p>d. 1900 U.S. Census, Gainesville, Prince William, Virginia, population schedule, Supervisor's District 8, Enumeration District 80, sheet 10A, dwelling 167, family 167, entry for Geo Robison household; digital image, <i>Ancestry.com</i> (<a href="http://www.ancestry.com">http://www.ancestry.com</a> : accessed 24 July 2021); citing FHL microfilm 1241724.</p> <p>e. 1910 U.S. Census, Gainesville, Prince William, Virginia, population schedule, Supervisor's District 8, Enumeration District 96, sheet 2B, dwelling 30, family 31, entry for George Robinson household; digital image, <i>Ancestry.com</i> (<a href="http://www.ancestry.com">http://www.ancestry.com</a> : accessed 24 July 2021); citing FHL microfilm 1375656.</p> <p>f. 1920 U.S. Census, Gainesville, Prince William, Virginia, population schedule, Supervisor's District 8, Enumeration District 102, sheet 7B, dwelling 135, family 138, entry for George Robinson household; digital</p>		

- image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 24 July 2021); citing NARA T625 roll 1907.
- g. 1930 U.S. Census, Gainesville, Prince William, Virginia, population schedule, Supervisor's District 2, Enumeration District 76-8, sheet 8B, dwelling 158, family 156, entry for George Robinson household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 24 July 2021); citing FHL microfilm 2342190.
- h. "Virginia, U.S., Death Records, 1912-2014", database with images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 22 July 2021), George Robinson, (4 October 1857 - 20 November 1933), Gainesville, Prince William, Virginia; citing Virginia Department of Health, certificate 25293.

The most consistent date given is the year 1857. That year is provided in the 1930 census; the 1900 census reported George's birth as October 1857; then George's death certificate gives the exact date of 4 October 1857. Another indicator that George was born around 1857 is that 1857 is near the middle of the range of birth years provided for George. Often the middle of a range provides the most accurate birth year as it can account for both when an informant reported an older birth year and a younger birth year. 4 October 1857 is the most accurate birthdate for George Robinson with the current sources.

So, if George Robinson was born during "fall-time" in 1857, then his conception most likely happened in the early months of 1857. George Robinson's death certificate also lists his birthplace as Fauquier County, Virginia.

### Dan Smith's Birth

Seven sources provide a variety of birthdates for Dan Smith. The following table shows the different birth dates from each of the sources.

**Table 2. Sources of Dan Smith's Birthdate**

Source	Explanation	Birthdate
1874 Marriage <sup>a</sup>	First source we have of Dan. Assuming he was at least 18 at time of marriage then he was probably born 1856 or earlier.	1856 or earlier
1880 Census <sup>b</sup>	Age: 29; born in VA; both parents born in VA	Abt 1851
1900 Census <sup>c</sup>	Age: 46; born Mar 1854; born in VA; both parents born in VA	Mar 1854

1910 Census <sup>d</sup>	Age 50; born in US; parents both born in US	1860
1920 Census <sup>e</sup>	Age 67; born in VA; father born in US; mother born in VA	Abt 1853
1923 Death Certificate <sup>f</sup>	Age: about 67; birth date: I don't know; born in VA; parents info: Don't know; filled out by his son Howard L. Smith	Abt 1856
Cemetery <sup>g</sup>	Born: 5 Feb 1857	5 Feb 1857
<p>a. Marriage License for Daniel Smith and Emma Wooten, database with images, <i>FamilySearch.org</i> (<a href="http://www.familysearch.org">http://www.familysearch.org</a> : accessed 10 July 2021), 18 October 1874, Whitfield County, Georgia; citing Family History Library microfilm #339861.</p> <p>b. 1880 U.S. Census, Dalton, Whitfield, Georgia, population schedule, East Dalton, Enumeration District 194, sheet 18, dwelling 154, family 154, entry for Daniel Smith household; digital image, <i>Ancestry.com</i> (<a href="http://www.ancestry.com">http://www.ancestry.com</a> : accessed 13 July 2021); citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 171.</p> <p>c. 1900 U.S. Census, Dalton, Whitfield, Georgia, population schedule, North Dalton, Enumeration District 107, sheet 15A, dwelling 292, family 307, entry for Dan Smith household; digital image, <i>Ancestry.com</i> (<a href="http://www.ancestry.com">http://www.ancestry.com</a> : accessed 13 July 2021); citing FHL microfilm 1240229.</p> <p>d. 1910 U.S. Census, Dalton, Whitfield, Georgia, population schedule, North Depot Street, Enumeration District 157, sheet 14A, dwelling 145, family 145, entry for Dan Smith household; digital image, <i>Ancestry.com</i> (<a href="http://www.ancestry.com">http://www.ancestry.com</a> : accessed 13 July 2021); citing NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 220.</p> <p>e. 1920 U.S. Census, Dalton, Whitfield, Georgia, population schedule, E Dept St, Enumeration District 197, sheet 13A, dwelling 145, family 145, entry for Daniel L. Smith household; digital image, <i>Ancestry.com</i> (<a href="http://www.ancestry.com">http://www.ancestry.com</a> : accessed 13 July 2021); citing NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 285.</p> <p>f. Death Certificate for Daniel L. Smith, Whitfield County, Georgia, 9 January 1923; citing Georgia Department of Health, certificate #3738.</p> <p>g. <i>Find A Grave</i>, database with images (<a href="http://www.findagrave.com/memorial/181356737">www.findagrave.com/memorial/181356737</a>: accessed 27 July 2021), memorial page for Dan L. Smith (5 February 1857 - 9 January 1923), Find A Grave Memorial #181356737; citing Calhoun-Famber Cemetery, Dalton, Whitfield County, Georgia; photo included.</p>		

This analysis shows that out of the sources collected for Dan's birth, the 1910 census, which reports a birthdate of 1860, is a clear outlier among the data. Most other sources report birth years in the range of 1851-1857. Using the logic that the middle of that range may be the most accurate range, then 1854 may be the most accurate birth year for Dan Smith. The two sources that provide a month for Dan's birthdate report March and February. Therefore, he probably knew he was born in the first few months of the year but did not know his actual birthdate.

## GEORGE ROBINSON'S MOTHER

George Robinson's mother is well-documented as Caroline Robinson. This is found in the 1870 census, where George is listed in Caroline's household, and in George's death certificate, where his mother is listed as Caroline Robinson.<sup>17</sup> As for where Caroline Robinson lived around the time of George's conception, correspondence with another researcher provided that Caroline Robinson was owned by Jaquelin Marshall Meredith's cousin, William C. Stribling.<sup>18</sup> This researcher also claimed that DNA research has shown that Caroline Robinson was most likely the granddaughter of Dr. Robert Stribling, Jaquelin Marshall Meredith's uncle. This research reported that Dr. Robert Stribling owned both Caroline and her mother, and both were left to William Stribling when Dr. Robert Stribling died.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, the researcher did not provide sources for any of these claims.

The will of Dr. Robert M. Stribling does list the servants that are to be advanced to his son William C. Stribling, and that list includes "Dianna...and Caroline, her daughter" (see Figure 3).<sup>20</sup> The will recorded the list of enslaved people in 1847, but the court did not prove the will until 1862, when Dr. Robert M. Stribling died. George was not born until 1857, so he would not be expected to be included in the will. This would imply that Caroline Robinson lived on Dr. Robert M. Stribling's plantation at the time of George Robinson's conception.

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<sup>17</sup> 1870 U.S. Census, Scott, Fauquier, Virginia, population schedule, Upperville Post Office, sheet 85, dwelling 521, family 516, entry for Caroline Robison household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 24 July 2021); citing NARA fil M593, roll 1645.

"Virginia, U.S., Death Records, 1912-2014," database with images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 22 July 2021), George Robinson, (4 October 1857 - 20 November 1933), Gainesville, Prince William, Virginia; citing Virginia Department of Health, certificate 25293.

<sup>18</sup> Private email held by author.

<sup>19</sup> Private email held by author.

<sup>20</sup> "Virginia, U.S. Wills and Probate Records, 1652-1900," Fauquier County, Will Books, Vol 27-29, 1857-1965, entry for Robert M. Stribling's will, 27 August 1846; digitized microfilm images, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 4 May 2022), image number 673-674; citing Virginia, County, Districts, and Probate Courts. **Document 13**

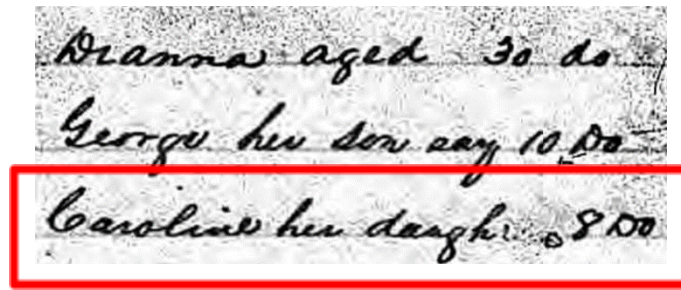


Figure 3. Caroline Robinson listed in Dr. Robert Stribling's Will

The 1850 and 1860 slave schedules for Dr. Robert Stribling show entries for an enslaved woman born around the right time to be Caroline.<sup>21</sup> The Virginia birth registers also show an enslaved man born on Dr. Robert Stribling's plantation in 1857.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps this is George?

## DAN SMITH'S MOTHER

### Documentary Evidence

If Jaquelin Marshall Meredith conceived a child with a slave around 1857, this plantation is the best place to begin a search for Dan Smith's mother. It should be noted that Dan Smith's mother could have been any female African American that Jaquelin Marshall Meredith interacted with around 1854.

The Virginia birth register does show a male slave born on the plantation of Dr. Robert Stribling in the year 1854.<sup>23</sup> Dr. Robert Stribling's will does mention a slave named Agnes who had a

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<sup>21</sup> 1850 U.S. Census, Fauquier County, Virginia, slave schedule, Ashby's District, page 825, line 18, entry for Doctor R. M. Stribling; digital image, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 20 April 2022); citing FHL microfilm #444976. **Document 14**

1860 U.S. Census, Fauquier County, Virginia, slave schedule, Southwest Revenue, page 30, line 38, entry for R. M. Stribling Sr.; digital image, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 20 April 2022); citing FHL microfilm #000805390. **Document 15**

<sup>22</sup> "Birth records (Virginia), 1853-1896; indexes, 1853-1896; indexes, 1853-1899; delayed birth indexes, 1912-1950", Not named, 1857, Fauquier County, Virginia; database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 23 April 2021), image #26 of 641; citing FHL microfilm #004284999. **Document 16**

<sup>23</sup> "Birth records (Virginia), 1853-1896; indexes, 1853-1896; indexes, 1853-1899; delayed birth indexes, 1912-1950", Not Named, August 1854, Fauquier County, Virginia; database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 23 April 2021), image #602 of 642; citing FHL microfilm #004254994. **Document 17**

son around the right age to be this male slave. However, Agnes' son is unnamed in the will.<sup>24</sup> Agnes has not yet been in the 1870 census, but she and her son were willed to Dr. Robert Stribling's daughter Mrs. Anne Waller.

It should be noted that Jaquelin Marshall Meredith's cousin, William C. Stribling, and Jaquelin's aunt, Eliza (Clarkson) Marshall, had multiple male slaves born in the proper timeframe to be Dan Smith. Both William C. Stribling and Eliza Marshall were relatives of Jaquelin Marshall Meredith, and it is just as likely that one of their slaves could be the mother of Dan. Fauquier County and Stafford County also had a decent population of free people of color that perhaps could have been Dan's mother. Associates also commonly borrowed slaves from one another for some time. Perhaps Jaquelin Marshall Meredith borrowed Dan's mother from one of his associates? Unfortunately, this would be very hard to trace in the records.

One record of interest that may provide more information is William C. Stribling's Ledger, which is available through the African American Historical Association of Fauquier County, Virginia.<sup>25</sup> This ledger is where William C. Stribling kept track of his business notes, including borrowing and lending enslaved people. While the original record is not available for viewing, an online index names some of the slaves included in the record. Neither George Robinson, Caroline Robinson, nor Dan Smith is listed in the index, but there are some entries with interactions between William C. Stribling and Jaquelin Marshall Meredith. Unfortunately, no dates are associated with the index to give context to what enslaved people would have been around at the time of interest. There are also 400 entries in the ledger. The association is currently working on digitizing the entire ledger. Still, in the meantime, the only way to view the original is by physically going to their location in Fauquier County, Virginia.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> "Virginia, U.S. Wills and Probate Records, 1652-1900", Fauquier County, Will Books, Vol 27-29, 1857-1965, entry for Robert M. Stribling's will, 27 August 1846; digitized microfilm images, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 4 May 2022), image number 673-674; citing Virginia, County, Districts, and Probate Courts.

<sup>25</sup> "Know Their Names: Ledger 1841-1866 (Dr. William C. Stribling, Hartland Farm, Markham VA)," *Afro-American Historical Association of Fauquier County* (<http://www.aahafauquier.org> : accessed 28 May 2022).

<sup>26</sup> Private email held by author.

## DNA Evidence

As there is a myriad of directions documentary research could go, with none being more advantageous than another, DNA research provides the best path forward to find an answer to who Dan Smith's mother is. Network graphs were created for each of the five test-takers for the research project. A network graph is a clustering tool that sorts a test-taker's DNA matches into different clusters based on their shared matches. So, as the test-taker is related to DNA matches, if those DNA matches are also related to each other, that would form a cluster. These clusters usually represent the descendants of a common ancestor between the matches. Each node in the graph is a DNA match to a test-taker. Each line is a shared match connection between two DNA matches. When many matches match each other, a cluster is formed. Lines between the clusters indicate relationships between the clusters. Each color represents a different cluster. Each cluster has been assigned a number as well for ease of discussion. Using identified genetic networks that included Dan Smith's descendants, creating subclusters of those clusters allowed for a more in-depth look at the DNA matches. This process with the Tester 2's matches resulted in seven subclusters, shown in the network graph below (Figure 5).

*Image Withheld to Protect Privacy of DNA Matches*

### **Figure 6. Subclusters of Tester 2's Network Graph**

Cluster 3 is in the middle of the network graph, with clusters 2, 5, and 4 slightly below cluster 3 and clusters 0, 1, 6, and 7, slightly above cluster 3. There are also many interconnections between the clusters. Perhaps the separation of the clusters above and below cluster 3 could signify Dan Smith's paternal and maternal matches?

When identifying the common ancestor of each of these clusters, cluster 3 (the middle cluster) consisted of mainly direct descendants of Dan Smith. Cluster 2 (the bright green cluster at the bottom) contained mainly direct descendants of Jaquelin Marshall Meredith. Cluster 5 showed mainly direct descendants of Jaquelin Marshall Meredith's father, Reuben Meredith. The common ancestors of the other clusters have not yet been identified. Pedigree triangulation and tree building



were used to find connections between the matches, but as many of the matches in these subclusters do not have completed trees, the process is time-consuming and will need to be continued in a future phase of research.

Both clusters 1 and 7 lead back to Caldwell families from the early 1800s in North Carolina, but one clear common ancestor couple has not yet been identified. The Caldwell families are white, and the matches identified through them only show European ethnicity. However, these clusters also show matches with African ethnicity. None of the matches in these clusters seem to share DNA with the Meredith matches. Perhaps the Caldwell's are a more distant white relative of Dan Smith's mother? Where do the matches with African ethnicity intersect on their family trees?

The completed process of subclusters for the other test-takers in this project produced less defined subclusters. Therefore, the network graph of Tester 2 showed the best promise for analysis. Tester 2 had the least amount of overlap between Tester 2's Dan Smith line and other lines, whereas the other matches had more pedigree collapse in their Dan Smith line. As most of the time allotted for this project confirmed Jaquelin Marshall Meredith's timeline with documentary research, a future phase of the project will have to return to the DNA evidence to utilize the clues provided in the DNA of Dan Smith's mother.

## A DISCUSSION ON DNA COVERAGE

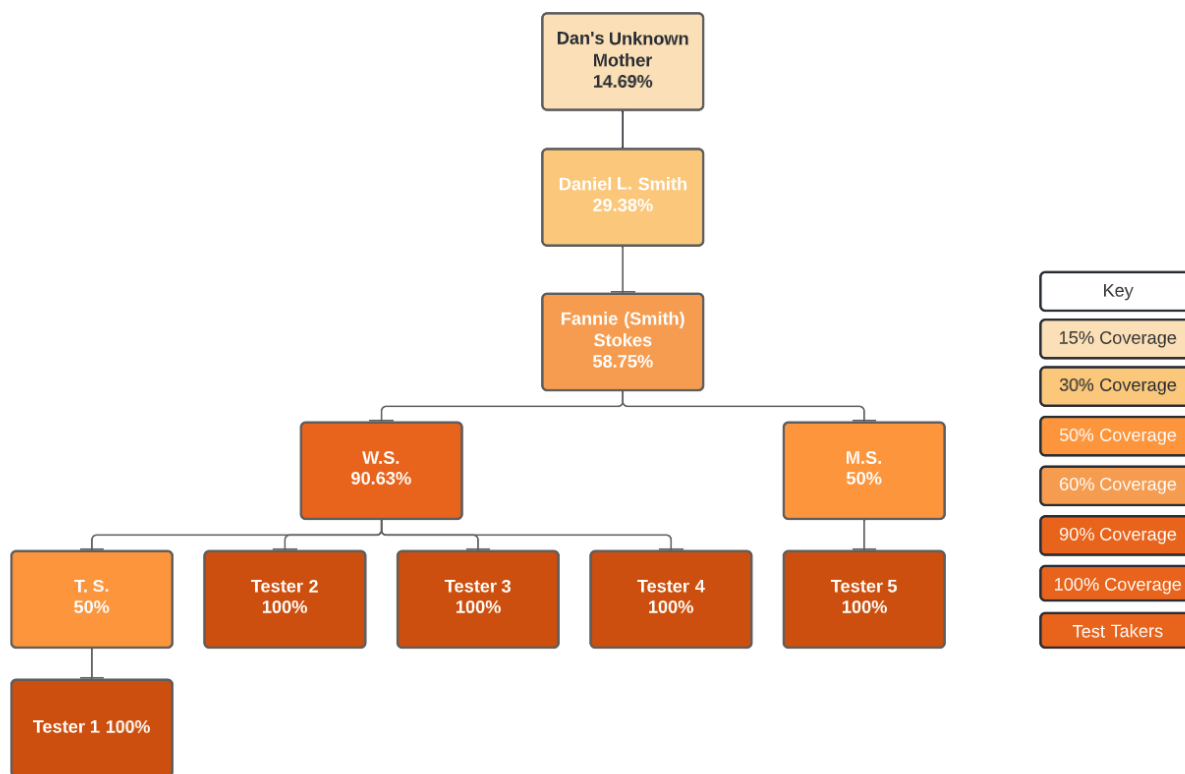
Something that would aid in identifying Dan Smith's mother through DNA would be to collect more DNA from descendants of Dan Smith. This would increase the matches we could find representing DNA passed down from Dan Smith's mother. The term for this in genetic genealogy is DNA coverage.<sup>27</sup> For example, if the objective of a project were to prove a test-taker's mother, and only the test-taker's DNA had been collected, then 50% of the DNA of the research subject (the

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<sup>27</sup> Paul Woodbury, "Covering Your Bases: Introduction to Autosomal DNA Coverage," published 2020; Legacy Tree Genealogists (<https://www.legacytree.com/blog/introduction-autosomal-dna-coverage> : accessed 22 January 2022), paragraph 6.



test-taker's mother) would be covered in the analysis. In this case, only about 14% of Dan Smith's mother's DNA is being represented through the current test-takers (see Figure 6).



**Figure 7. Current DNA Coverage of Dan Smith's Mother**

To increase the coverage of Dan Smith's mother's genome, the best practice would be to collect DNA from multiple descendants of each of Dan Smith's children. This would ensure that DNA that only passed through one child did not limit the analysis. Table 3 shows the increase of DNA coverage gained from the matches of the different children of Dan Smith's children. Keep in mind that if DNA matches increase the DNA coverage of a research subject by more than 5%, it is highly suggested to collect that DNA.

**Table 3. Potential DNA Coverage Increase from Descendants of Dan Smith**

Heirs from children of Dan Smith	DNA Coverage Increase (in %)
----------------------------------	------------------------------

2 matches from Nettie Smith	+5.52% DNA Coverage
1 match from Sarah Smith	+3.72% DNA Coverage
1 match from Cleo Smith	+3.26% DNA Coverage
4 matches from Mattie Smith	+3.63% DNA Coverage
6 matches from Gertrude Smith	+2.34% DNA Coverage
<b>Total Increase if All Matches Share Their DNA</b>	<b>+18.47% DNA Coverage</b>

\*Formulas used for the calculations in Figure 7 & Table 3 are from Paul Woodbury's article on DNA Coverage.

The high potential of increase in DNA coverage for Dan Smith's mother's genome is clear in Table 3. Contacting these matches and gaining access to their DNA results should be a high priority for the next phase of the research project. If the DNA matches are not responding to messages through *Ancestry.com*, public databases could aid in finding these matches' physical addresses. Letters could then be sent requesting access to their DNA results.

## A DISCUSSION ON VISUAL PHASING

One tactic genetic genealogists use to break down brick walls is analyzing the segment data of test-takers and DNA matches to trace which DNA segments were passed down from which ancestors. This can be a strong tool in proving relationships. Unfortunately, *AncestryDNA* does not provide segment data. In this phase of the project, segment data for Tester 1 and Tester 3 was reviewed using the GEDmatch database. Unfortunately, very few descendants of Dan Smith have been identified on the GEDmatch database. This made the analysis of the segments less supportive.

A few ways to overcome this limitation would be to first contact known descendants of Dan Smith and ask them to upload their DNA to GEDmatch. This would help identify a cluster of matches on GEDmatch that all share DNA with Dan Smith. Another tool that could be utilized in the next phase of the research project would be visual phasing. Visual phasing is a chromosome mapping methodology where segment data from three full siblings are analyzed to assign segments

of DNA to the test-taker's four grandparents.<sup>28</sup> This narrows down the segments of interest by 75% to have a better chance of correctly identifying which segments were passed from Dan Smith and his mother. It should be noted that this is a very time-consuming process, but it could make significant progress in identifying Dan Smith's mother and the DNA matches that descend from her line.

## CONCLUSION

At this point in the research, the allotted time had expired. The hypothesis for this research report was that the mother of Dan Smith was an enslaved woman on the plantation of Dr. Robert Stribling in Fauquier County, Virginia. Family stories and authored sources have placed Jaquelin Marshall Meredith staying with the Stribling's around the time of Dan Smith's conception. Jaquelin Marshall Meredith also had a child with Caroline Robinson, another enslaved woman on the Stribling plantation.

An analysis of Jaquelin Marshall Meredith's timeline, along with a calculation of the most accurate conception dates for both George Robinson and Dan Smith, provided evidence that Jaquelin Marshall Meredith most likely lived in Fauquier County, Virginia, between 1854 and 1857, the estimated birth years for George Robinson and Dan Smith. The will of Dr. Robert Stribling confirmed he owned George Robinson's mother, Caroline, and both were left to William Stribling when Dr. Robert Stribling died. Unfortunately, the original researcher was unable to provide sources for any of these claims.

The other slaves mentioned in Dr. Robert Stribling's will were considered as possible mothers for Dan. One woman, Agnes, and her son were willed to Dr. Robert Stribling's daughter Mrs. Anne Waller. Unfortunately, no other information about Agnes was found at this point in the research. Research identified a promising source in William C. Stribling's ledger, but future research will have to gain access to viewing the original ledger instead of just the index. There is a myriad of

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<sup>28</sup> Blaine Bettinger, "Visual Phasing: An Example (Part 1 of 5)," published 21 November 2016; *The Genetic Genealogist* (<https://thegeneticgenealogist.com/2016/11/21/visual-phasing-an-example-part-1-of-5/>; accessed 06 June 2022).

possibilities as to who Dan's mother may have been, with the limited amount of information found in documentary research.

Using DNA research, subclusters of genetic networks were created to try to focus more on DNA matches who descended from Dan Smith's mother. Pedigree triangulation and tree building were used to find connections between the matches, but since many of the matches in these subclusters do not have completed trees, the process is taking time and will need to be continued in a future phase of research. As most of the time for this project was spent confirming Jaquelin Marshall Meredith's timeline with documentary research, a future phase of the project will have to return to the DNA evidence to utilize the clues provided in the DNA of Dan Smith's mother.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- **DNA**
  - Collect DNA from more descendants of Dan Smith. Twelve additional matches whose DNA would support this project have been identified. These matches should be contacted on Ancestry, Facebook, and postal mail. Other DNA websites should also be utilized to find more DNA matches.
  - When reaching out to the identified DNA matches, ask them to upload their DNA to GEDmatch to increase the descendants of Dan Smith with their segment data available.
  - Try visual phasing using segment data from Tester 2, Tester 3, and Tester 4., since they are three full siblings. This would narrow the segments that need to be identified as possible segments from Dan Smith's mother.
  - Continuing building trees for matches in the subclusters of interest will likely lead to more hypotheses for Dan Smith's mother. Many of the trees for the matches of interest need to be verified and are time-consuming to build. This will be an important part of the next phase but also may take considerable time to correctly build these trees and find common ancestors between them.
- **Documentary**
  - Work with the African American Historical Association of Fauquier County, Virginia, to either view William Stribling's ledger virtually or have a local associate view the ledger in person. Family Locket Genealogists are well acquainted with

genealogists throughout the country and could work with a colleague to have this completed.

- Looking more into Robert Stribling's slaves, particularly what happened to them after the Civil War would be a helpful endeavor. The record that would help the most with this would be the 1870 census. As Caroline Robinson has been identified in the 1870 census, the other African Americans who live in her community could be researched to discover if any of them might be candidates for Dan Smith's mother.

Thanks for allowing us to research your family! We look forward to continuing as desired.

A.K. / D.E.

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