

SOC GEN 108 MAGAZINE

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DNA, ANCESTRY, & REPARATIONS

VOLUME 1



HOW CAN GENETICS SUPPORT SLAVERY REPARATIONS?

WHO WE ARE



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A message to our readers...

Dear readers,

In light of the 2020 Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests, conversations regarding reparations for slavery have been pushed to the forefront of social debates. Similarly, recent efforts to pass the bill titled HR 40, which outlines goals for distributing reparations to descendants of enslaved Black Americans, has garnered attention for this issue as well.

Given the current political climate, our group aims to shed more light on a growing phenomenon: using genetic ancestry tests to prove relations to enslaved Black Americans in the hopes of receiving government reparations.

We recognize that slavery is a sensitive topic, and some of our discussions may be difficult for readers to get through. We found this material challenging ourselves, but we believe that it is important to be open and honest about this country's history. If these topics become too heavy for you, we suggest that you take a break from reading. Take a walk, chat with friends and family, or clear your mind with television or music.

We hope that this magazine provokes thought and encourages discussions with those around you. We hope that you all learn from this magazine, because we certainly learned a lot when making it.

Thanks for reading.

Sincerely,
Christian, Ella, Kelechi, & Shanzey

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The Story of Farmer-Paellman

**WRITTEN BY CHRISTIAN PARKS,
DESIGNED BY SHANZEY SYED**

Farmer-Paellman vs FleetBoston Financial Corporation, AETNA et al. is the most notable class action lawsuit regarding genetic ancestry testing being used in the fight for reparations for African American peoples. This case involved the plaintiff, Deadria Farmer-Paellman suing multiple companies including Aetna Insurance and R.J. Reynolds Tobacco for profiting off of enslaving their ancestors. Farmer-Paellman sought billions of dollars from these companies as reparation payment for the egregious abuse.

However, the judge ruled that the genetic evidence to prove ancestry was not sufficient to determine relationships between the enslaved ancestors and the plaintiffs, thus no reparations were awarded (1). Nonetheless, genetic ancestry technology has advanced much further since 2002 when this case took place (see page 27 for more information about GAT technology). Now with more accurate and accessible genetic testing, a suit like Farmer-Paellman's can be taken more seriously in the court of law and lead to actual restitution for the descendants of slavery.

Image of Deadria Farmer-Paellman



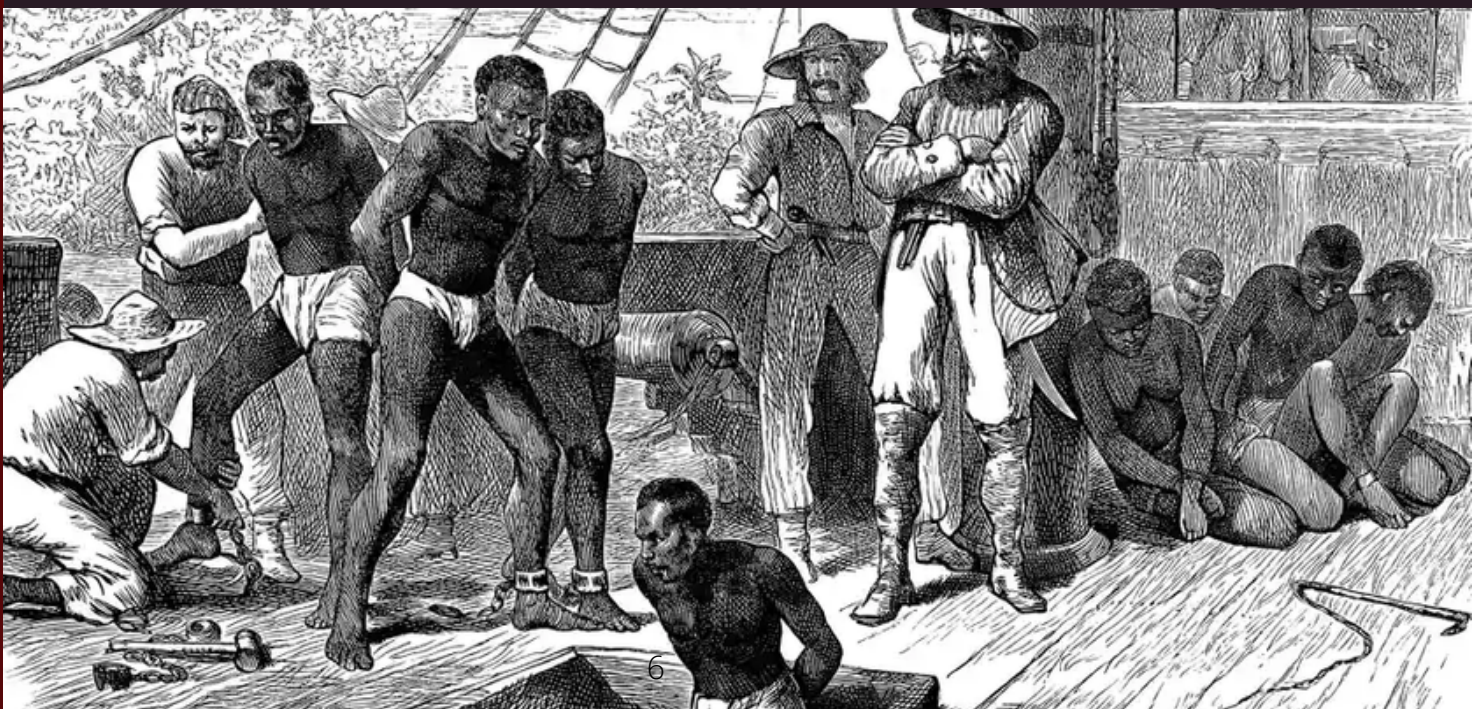


Slavery: What APUSH Didn't Teach Us

WRITTEN BY CHRISTIAN PARKS,
DESIGNED BY SHANZEY SYED

Slavery. America's sinister past that has been modeled and mutated throughout the development of this country to what it is today. Ingrained into the very fabric that flies our stars and stripes. Beginning in 1600s, West Africans were kidnapped from their homes and forced into slavery in the American colonies. Exploited to work in the production of crops like cotton and tobacco these Black people faced the most gruesome atrocities. These horrors included but definitely were not limited to physical abuse in the form of whippings and beatings, sexual abuse through harassment, rape, and forced concubinage, as well as mental abuse including separation of families and public humiliation (2).

In a 1712 letter addressed to fellow slave owners Willie Lynch conveys his foolproof method guaranteeing, "If installed correctly, it will control slaves for at least 300 years", he tells his colleagues to impart fear, distrust, and envy among their slaves through pitting them against one another with age, sex, skin color, size, or any difference possible. He then goes on describing how to break their spirit, "Take the meanest and most relentless N-, strip him of his clothes in front of the remaining male N-, the female, the N-infant, tar and feather him, tie each leg to a horse in different directions... Don't kill him, but put the fear of God in him, for he can be useful for future breeding... Then take the female and run a series of tests on her to see if she will submit to you desire willingly. Do not hesitate to use the bull whip to extract the last bit of b- out of her. Take care not to kill her, for in doing so, you spoil good economics. When in complete submission, she will train her offspring in early years to submit to labor when they become of age " (3).





This document delivers stomach-turning insight to the unimaginable brutalities that took place across America. Blacks in America were seen as subhuman and treated worse than cattle. Due to the prevalence of rape by white enslavers, 16.7 percent of African Americans' ancestors can be traced back to Europe. (4).

A recent study from psychiatric researchers at Cardiff University concluded that 50 percent of rape survivors develop PTSD (5). Enslaved and freedom-seeking African American survivors of rape – female, male, old, young, regardless of physical and mental abilities – sustained incomprehensible fear, anxiety, and shame associated with a condition they could not control, in an environment they also could not control.



Slavery Reimagined and the Need for Reparations

A HISTORY OF EXPLOITATION AND WHITE SUPREMACY IS BLIGHTED AND HARD TO ERASE. WHEN THE PRACTICE OF SLAVERY WAS ABOLISHED, THE ROOTS AND VALUES SURVIVED THROUGH RACIST POLICIES AND IDEOLOGIES THAT ARE STILL IN EFFECT TODAY. THIS 5-PART FEATURE ARTICLE EXAMINES THE MANY FORMS SLAVERY HAS TAKEN OVER YEARS UNTIL PRESENT-DAY.

After over 250 years of forced enslavement under the worst imaginable conditions, African Americans were released under the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. This executive order and more Reconstruction Era policies to come granted freedom, freedom from their oppressors, political freedom to vote for those that represented Black people, and financial freedom in the form of 40 acres of federally-owned land and a mule to each Black family in hopes of the American Dream, right? WRONG. The Emancipation Proclamation only applied to states that had seceded, thus slavery in loyal border states was left untouched for years to come, it also exempted the parts of the Confederacy that had already been under Union control. The abandoned and confiscated government land that was promised in Special Field Orders No. 15 otherwise known as the "Forty Acres and a Mule" clause was never rented, sold, or given to African Americans with President Andrew



40 ACRES AND A MULE REPRESENTED A TURNING POINT FOR BLACK FAMILIES. SOURCE: EMERY FRANKLIN (2019)

Johnson citing that former slaves "would not work without white supervision" (6). With this African Americans were hung out to dry, without land many families had no alternative but to resume working on plantations owned by whites. Some earned measly wages, others became sharecroppers who divided the crop proceeds with the owner at the end of the year. Most Black families were left propertyless and poor. This was simply another form of slavery under the guise of progression and reformation.

BY THE TIME SHARECROPPERS HAD SHARED THEIR CROPS AND PAID THEIR DEBTS, THEY SELDOM HAD MONEY LEFT OVER. OFTEN THEY WERE UNEDUCATED AND COULD NOT ARGUE WITH MERCHANTS AND LANDOWNERS THAT CHEATED THEM. SHARECROPPERS FREQUENTLY BECAME TIED TO ONE PLANTATION, HAVING NO CHOICE BUT TO WORK UNTIL THEIR DEBTS WERE PAID. SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS



Slavery Reimagined: Redlining

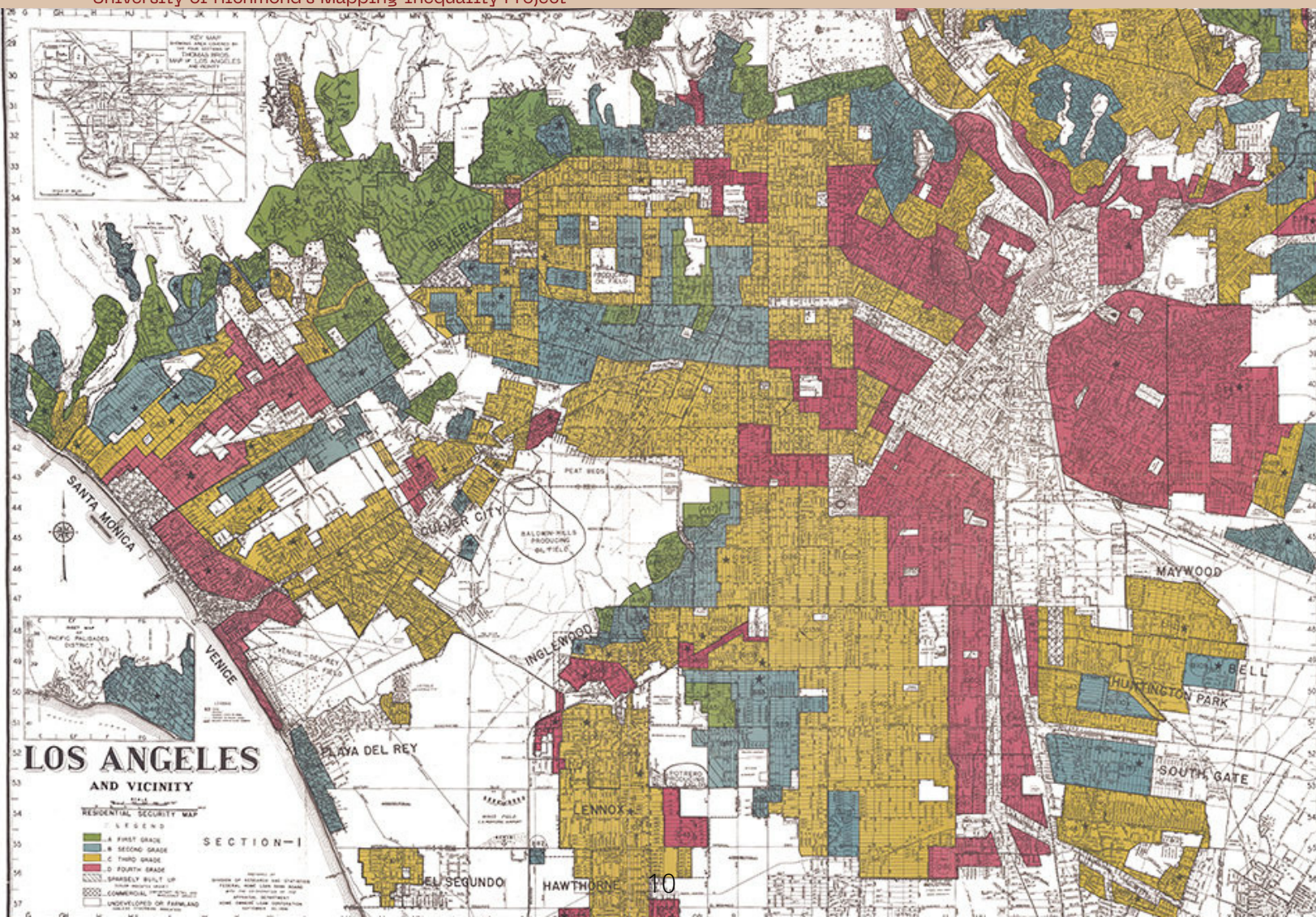
BY CHRISTIAN PARKS

White supremacist ideologies of ownership persisted through the highs and lows of American history. Following the Great Depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the New Deal's National Housing Act of 1934. In an attempt to stimulate the economy the program offered home-buying aid for Americans – But only white Americans. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) encouraged homeownership by providing federal backing of loans, thus guaranteeing mortgages. However, the FHA manual explicitly stated that "it is risky to make mortgage loans in predominantly Black areas" (7). Consequently, the federal subsidy for homeownership went almost entirely to white people, which fortified housing segregation in the U.S., systemically drawing lines between

Black and white neighborhoods that would transform into the communities we live in today. This practice is known as "redlining" which comes from actual red lines on maps that identified Black neighborhoods as hazardous, in which the government would deny lending and investment services to the residents. When specifying the ways to build generational wealth Forbes.com, cites property as the most important financial asset. This legacy of property discrimination is undeniable when looking at maps of housing values and demographic patterns in our cities. The lack of investment in Black neighborhoods carries deep-seated repercussions that sabotage the goal to acquire generational wealth, especially when paired with overpolicing and mass incarceration (see page 14 for more information on mass incarceration).

**EMANCIPATION WITHOUT HOPE FOR ECONOMIC
MOBILITY IS NOT FREEDOM.**

A 1939 Home Owners' Loan Corporation "Residential Security Map" of Los Angeles shows discrimination against minority neighborhoods, marked in red, were denied FHA-backed mortgages Source: University of Richmond's Mapping Inequality Project



SHERMAN FIELD ORDER No. 5

By: Kelechi Udeze



On January 16, 1865, during the Civil War (1861–65), Union general William T. Sherman issued his Special Field Order No. 15, which redistributed the roughly 400,000 acres of land to newly freed Black families in forty-acre segments. It is also the likely origin of the phrase "forty acres and a mule," which spread throughout the South in the weeks and months following Sherman's march. Field Order No. 15 served to settle Black families on confiscated land, encourage freedmen to join the Union army to help sustain their newly won liberty, and designate a general officer to act as inspector of settlements. Providing settlement to the new class of free southern laborers provided a short-lived promise for Black refugees and locals who had been under Union army administration. Eventually, U.S. president Andrew Johnson overturned the directive in 1865, after the war had ended, and returned most of the land to the original owners. Even though it was short-lived, the order offered hope that the U.S. government could make restitution to African-Americans for enslavement. The phrase "forty acres and a mule" continued to be used in discussing the present-day movement supporting reparations. The fact that African-Americans were originally awarded reparations only to have them rescinded provide overwhelming evidence that it is time to pay reparations to the descendants of enslaved Blacks (8).

Slavery Reimagined: Jim Crow and Voter Suppression

BY CHRISTIAN PARKS

Jim Crow was the name of the racial caste system of primarily but not exclusively southern and border states between 1877 and the mid-1960s. These laws included but were not limited to: the restriction of a Black man offering to shake a white person's hand, the restriction of Blacks and whites eating together, whites not using courtesy titles such as Mr., Mrs., sir, ma'am, for Blacks, and even the allowance of white motorist to have the right-of-way at all intersections. These codes could be enforced by any white man that had reason to believe a rule was broken, in addition to the police. Violence, often by way of public lynching execution was used to demoralize Black folks and keep them at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Indeed Jim Crow was not only a set of unyielding anti-black laws, but also a way of life that systematically legitimized racism and relegated Black folks as second-class citizens. Churches taught that God supported racial segregation and Blacks were cursed, academia at just about every level taught that African Americans were culturally and intellectually inferior to whites, politicians cautioned against the great danger of integration, which would mongrelize the white race, and anti-Black stereotypes were riddled throughout media such as newspapers, magazines, and even children shows and games (9).

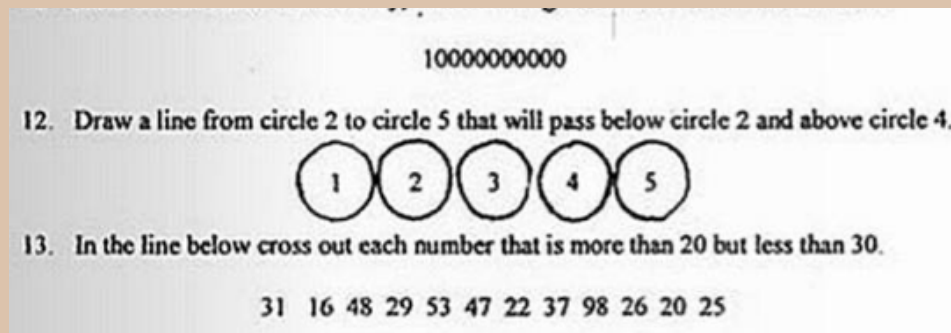
EMANCIPATION WITHOUT HOPE FOR ECONOMIC MOBILITY IS NOT FREEDOM.

The Fourteenth Amendment in 1868 granted citizenship to African Americans and the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870 claimed that "the right of citizens to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the U.S. or any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude", however this still did not necessarily translate into the ability to vote for Black folks. Nonetheless, states found loopholes to circumvent the Constitution, unfair poll taxes were implemented, cacographic literacy tests were administered, fraud was a common occurrence, and barbaric intimidation tactics were carried out by the white supremacist terrorist organization known as

the Ku Klux Klan (10). Mississippi Senator and proud Klansman Theodore Bilbo represented the state in the U.S. Senate from 1935 to 1947, in an announcement that he would seek re-election, Bilbo called on his Mississippians lynch Black people: "You and I know what's the best way to keep the N- from voting... You do it the night before" (11). Theodore Bilbo went on to win re-election... Voter suppression is still a practice today by way of perverse state legislation that disproportionately

affects people of color. Strict voter ID laws in North Carolina, Texas and Michigan, restrictions on Sunday voting in Georgia and Texas, longer wait times in minority neighborhoods, higher frequency of rejected mail-in ballots from minorities, and polling place consolidation have disproportionately impacted people of color barring them from voting (12).

EMANCIPATION WITHOUT HOPE FOR ECONOMIC MOBILITY IS NOT FREEDOM.



Can you solve this literacy test meant to disenfranchise Black voters? Source: Louisiana Literacy Test (1964)

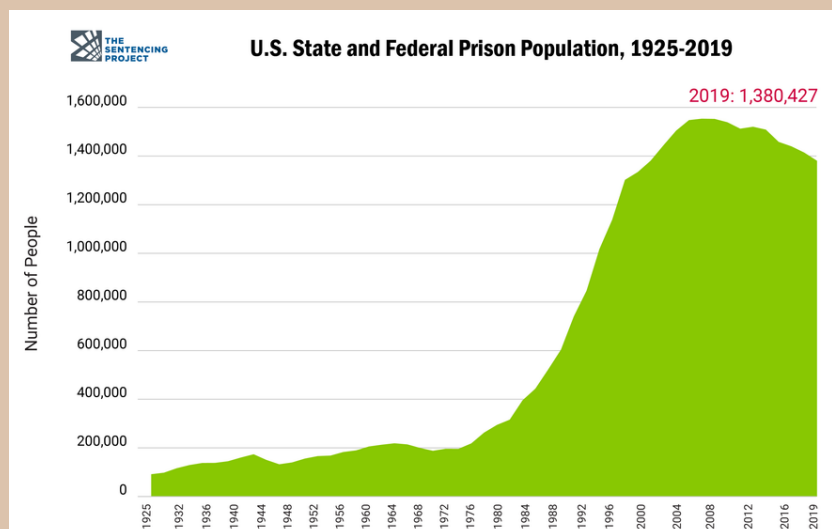
Slavery Reimagined: Incarceration and Policing

BY CHRISTIAN PARKS

The Thirteenth Amendment (1865) to the Constitution officially abolished slavery and involuntary servitude in the United States... under condition. The Thirteenth's fine print states that slavery may only continue as a "punishment for crime". The very next year, 1866, arguably the second most exploitative labor system in American history was born, convict leasing. African American men, and sometimes women and children were arrested and convicted for petty offenses such as "vagrancy", the crime of being unemployed, which carried a hefty fine that few Black people could pay, better yet Black unemployed people. These state laws otherwise known as Black Codes were intended to keep African Americans tied to their former owners and continue to disenfranchise Black folks, while also supplying the free labor shortage following Emancipation. Over 200,000 Black Americans were forced into this revised form of slavery, subjected to extremes of human cruelty in coal mines, terpentine factories, and lumber camps. Chained, starved, beaten, flogged, and sexually violated, thousands upon thousands of African Americans died from injury, disease, and torture. Yet the state and private corporations that leased these convicts enjoyed tremendous profits, both in sheer revenue from free labor and reduction in state expenditures on housing and care for convicts. In author, Douglas Blackmon's book *Slavery by Another Name*, he quotes an 1883 Alabama prison inspector describing leased convicts were being held on "trivial charges in desperate, miserable conditions, poorly fed, clothed, and unnecessarily chained", he then goes on to recount the "appalling number of deaths and appalling numbers of maimed and disabled men" held by various forced-labor "entrepreneurs" across the entire state (14).

The convict leasing system thrived for almost 50 years. Nevertheless, this was only the beginning of the exploitation of Black Americans by the penal system and industrialists to bolster economics and make a platform for politics. Subsequent to the Civil Rights Era that brought forth the Civil Rights Act and Voter Rights Act as well as the elimination of Jim Crow laws, in the 1970s President Richard Nixon brought forth "The War on Drugs" a campaign which employed fear mongering and racist rhetoric to vilify and incarcerate minority groups. Nixon's Chief of Domestic Policy, John Ehrlichman admitted that the campaign was targeted at their political enemies: the antiwar left and Black people. "We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and Blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did." (14). The 1970s marked an inflection point in the slavery timeline, where the rate of imprisonment in the United States quadrupled from then to today. Convict leasing, formerly known as slavery, became the prison-industrial complex an industry that generates a profit of \$4 billion a year.

SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS





SOURCE: JUSTICE FOR OUR LIVES

Private prisons companies and executives receive more government dollars based on mass incarceration, very similar to the aforementioned system... This complex incentivizes the construction and saturation of prisons across the country leading to 2.2 million people behind bars, the highest incarceration rate in the world (15). And while African Americans are only 13 percent of the population, they account for a staggering 37 percent of the incarcerated population (16). These statistics are alarming, but when you take into account various stress factors, mass incarceration is the culmination of years of white supremacy and exploitation of minority people. The origin of policing in this country can be traced back to the 18th century "Slave Patrol", an organization established to enforce a system of terror and crush slave uprisings, with the capacity to pursue, apprehend, and return runaway slaves to their owners. Slave Patrol tactics involved the utilization of excessive force to control and produce desired slave behavior. Although the Slave Patrol was disbanded following the Thirteenth Amendment, the legacy of policing was survived through professional crime hunters

that made arrests to drive the convict leasing industry. By the 20th century, local municipalities began to establish police departments to enforce local legislation, including Jim Crow (17).

Redlined districts associated with "high risk" and minority communities were flooded with police officers, inevitably increasing the rate of police violence, arrests, and ultimately incarceration. These discriminatory practices progressed while the police force expanded in budget and size to become the hyper-militarized Slave Patrol brood they are today. Thousands of minority folks have lost their lives to police brutality like George Floyd, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland, Rayshard Brooks, Breonna Taylor, and too many more. In 2015 the Washington Post reported, 40 percent of police killings of unarmed people were Black men, although only contributing a small 6 percent of the overall population (18). The results of a white supremacist framework that built this country are brutal and long lasting.

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MOBILITY IS NOT FREEDOM.**



HENRIETTA WOOD: THE RE-ENSLAVED FREE BLACK WOMAN

By: Kelechi Udeze

The trial began after eight years of legal proceedings. The jury came with a verdict of the rewarding Wood with two thousand five hundred dollars – a fraction of what Wood had asked for. In present-day, that amount would be worth nearly \$65,000, making it the most considerable sum ever granted by a U.S. court in slavery reparations. Henrietta Wood was born enslaved to a White family in Kentucky, bought by a merchant, and taken from her family. Later in her life, her mistress registered Wood as free. Wood spent the next several years performing domestic work, experiencing her "sweet taste of liberty." The children of the mistress believed that Wood should be enslaved again. Through the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, slave catchers would capture free Black men, women, and children and smuggle them into the South. The selling of the enslaved people benefited the Southern cotton industry. For the next 16 years, Wood was enslaved once again.

Wood filed a lawsuit asserting that she was free. It was eventually dismissed due to the confiscation of official papers, the inability of Wood to testify, and the denial of claims by the slave catchers. Wood would later be sold to one of the largest slaveholders in the South. These times for Wood was one of the difficult time of her life. After Juneteenth and post Civil War, Wood would still be enslaved. Her master granted her freedom, and she continued to work for him for the low wages he promised her she would receive. Her case is finally considered in the federal court and is still being contended by her former master's lawyers. They claimed that the master's crimes had occurred too far in the past -- a recurring argument against reparations. However, as stated before, the jury ruled that Wood should be paid for her enslavement (19). Even though Wood was compensated, her award was not a liberal equivalent for the loss of freedom she had suffered, but it does offer hope for many cases yet untried in federal court.



The Need for Reparations

BY CHRISTIAN PARKS

The transformation of slavery throughout the course of American history illuminates the glaring issue of institutional racism: 250 years of slavery, 50 years of convict leasing, 50 years of Jim Crow, as well as

50 years and counting in addition to and violence. embedded in all social relations, and – so much that Black reach economic parity counterparts without

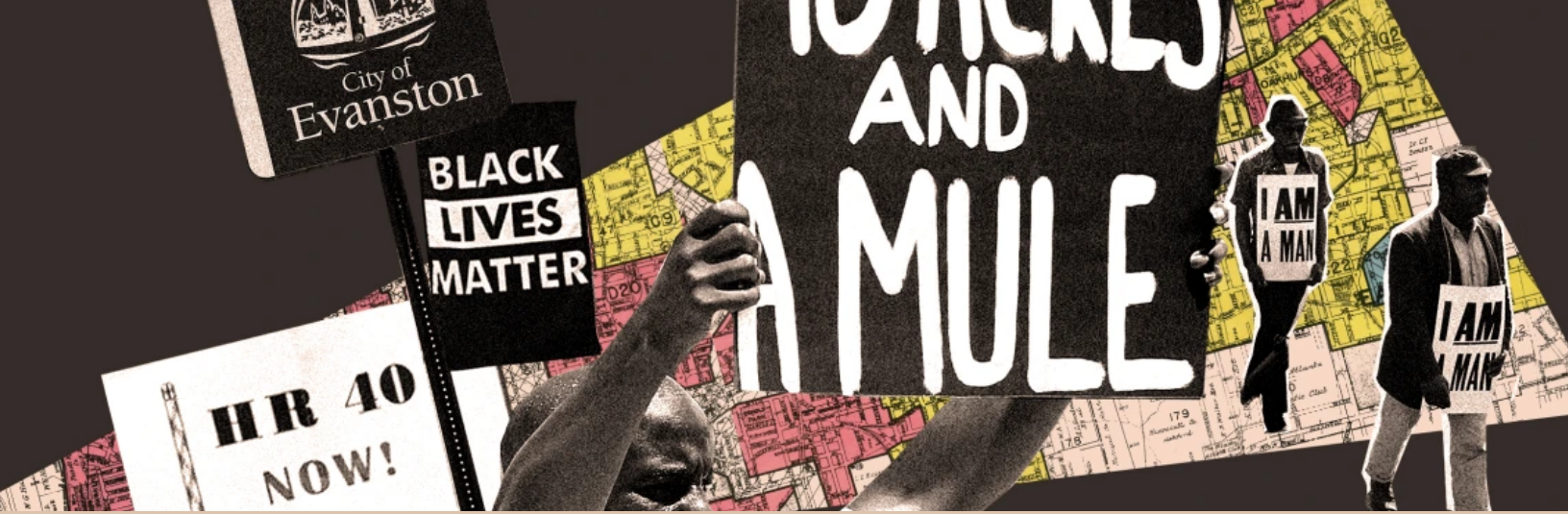
"Emancipation without hope for economic mobility is not freedom.
Emancipation without equality is not freedom.
Emancipation without representation is not freedom.
Emancipation without structural change is not freedom."

of mass incarceration segregation, redlining, Structural racism is facets of politics, most of all, economics Americans may never with their white vital intervention, thus

we need reparations. Reparations are a system of redress for egregious injustices, mainly administered as financial assets. Although the problem of racial injustice and the cycle of exploitation in America is a multifaceted issue ingrained in the fabric of America, executing reparations are a crucial part in building a country that is truly free.

SOURCE: BEN & JERRY'S





ARGUMENTS FOR/AGAINST REPARATIONS

By: Kelechi Udeze

Looking at both the advantages and disadvantages of slavery reparations would help discuss how to compensate the descendants of enslaved African-Americans justifiably.

1. THE REPARATIONS ARGUMENT IS BASED ON THE UNFOUNDED CLAIM THAT ALL AFRICAN-AMERICAN DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES SUFFER FROM THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SLAVERY AND DISCRIMINATION

When proposing for reparations earlier on, there was no evidence-based attempt made to prove that living individuals have been adversely affected by a slave system that was ended over 150 years ago. There is plenty of evidence the hardships that occurred were hardships that individuals could and did overcome.

Today the United States has a thriving, if somewhat tenuous, black middle class. By conventional measures of income, education, or occupation at least a third of African Americans can be described as middle class, as compared with about half of whites (20). Does its existence not suggest that economic adversity is the result of failures of individual character rather than the lingering after-effects of racial discrimination and a slave system that ceased to exist well over a century ago? How can the government be expected to decide an issue that is so subjective—and yet so critical—to the case?

2. REPARATIONS SETS AFRICAN-AMERICANS AGAINST THE NATION THAT GAVE THEM FREEDOM

Some view the reparations claim as an assault on America, conducted by racial separatists and the political left. It is an attack not only on white Americans, but on all Americans—especially African-Americans (21). African Americans should reject this temptation. Others reject this claim of separatism because America is already divided. The wealth gap merely highlights that American prosperity was ill-gotten and selective in its distribution (22). What is needed is an airing of family secrets, settling with old ghosts, to heal the American psyche.

3. REPARATIONS TO AFRICAN AMERICANS HAVE ALREADY BEEN PAID

The Civil Rights Acts and the advent of the Great Society in 1965 funneled trillions of dollars in transfer payments to African-Americans in the form of welfare benefits and racial preferences (in contracts, job placements and educational admissions) as the means to redress historic racial grievances. It is said that reparations for slavery are necessary to achieve a healing between African-Americans and other Americans (21). If trillion dollar restitutions and a wholesale rewriting of American law (in order to accommodate racial preferences) for African-Americans is not enough to achieve a "healing," what will? On the other hand, more important than any single check cut to any African American, the payment of reparations would represent America's maturation out of the childhood myth of its innocence into a wisdom worthy of its founders (22).

What counts as reparations?

BY SHANZEY SYED

STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS

Not only do Black college graduates have more student loan debt than white college graduates, but there are also more Black college graduates with debt than their white counterparts. In the 25–55 year age range, 40% of Black graduates have debt, compared to 30% of white graduates (23). Also, Black alumni have about \$45,000 in student loan debt, while white alumni have about \$30,000 in debt; in addition, people who attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have higher chances of receiving loans with higher interest rates (23).

Colleges like Georgetown and Princeton are making attempts to remedy their histories of slavery. Individuals whose enslaved ancestors were sold by these schools receive full benefits by these universities so that they can get degrees in higher education.

DOWN PAYMENT GRANTS AND HOUSING REVITALIZATION GRANTS

By receiving down payment grants, Black Americans will have “some initial equity in their homes relative to mortgage insurance loans” (23). Housing revitalization grants will improve predominantly Black neighborhoods that have been overlooked due to systematic racism and insufficient government and corporate investments. Houses in Black neighborhoods have been undervalued by about \$48,000 per home on average, which sums up to \$156 billion that homeowners should have received if homes were priced accordingly based on market rates (23). Also, factors such as gentrification have pushed Black people out of their neighborhoods due to higher prices.

COLLEGE TUITON

This one is pretty self explanatory. Black students interested in attending 4-year or 2-year colleges and universities will receive free education. Free tuition extends to both public and private colleges as financial aid to increase the number of Black Americans with degrees. Ultimately, it helps decrease racial disparities in higher education across the country.

INDIVIDUAL PAYMENTS

The goal of individual payments is to help alleviate the current racial wealth gap existing in the United States. In 2016, the Federal Reserve conducted the Survey of Consumer Finances and found that white families' median income was \$171,000, which is much larger than the \$17,600 median income for Black families. (23) So what do individual payments look like?

They would be similar to the stimulus checks allocated to families at the start of COVID-19. African American families would receive checks in the mail for the appropriate amount, taking into account factors such as inflation and economic factors.

LAND ALLOCATION

The government could distribute government and/or public land in the South or other regions to Black Americans and Native Americans. These plots of land will be used for "major educational, commercial, industrial, economic/business and health/wellness institutions and enterprises to benefit people of African descent" (24). Doing this would remedy past wrongs such as the lack of "40 acres and a mule" given to former enslaved Americans and the exclusion of Black Americans from benefiting from the Homestead Act.

BUSINESS GRANTS FOR STARTUPS, EXPANSION, PROPERTIES

Though Black businesses are more likely to be located in Black neighborhoods, Black business owners have lower chances of receiving money from banks that would help make their businesses more profitable. By allocating business grants to more Black business owners, the American government would help repair wealth inequality that has taken wealth from Black communities.

PROMOTION OF HEALTH & WELLNESS

Social and economic disparities caused by systematic racism take a toll on the physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing of Black Americans across the country. Not only is it harder to access medical and psychiatric services in predominantly Black neighborhoods, but it is also very difficult for individuals in these communities to receive treatment from Black medical professionals who may better understand their circumstances.

Considering health disparities and inaccessibility of healthcare services, the National African American Reparations Commission (24) makes suggestions on how we can allocate resources to improve the quality of life for Black Americans. One of these methods includes the creation of Black-owned wellness centers with trained professionals that “offer culturally appropriate, holistic preventative, mental health and curative treatment services” (24). Another suggestion includes allocating funds to hospitals that operate in Black neighborhoods and funds to HBCU medical schools. These resources would improve community members’ psychology and physiology, both of which have taken tolls due to the stresses of racism on macro and micro levels.

SO WHO RECEIVES THESE REPARATIONS?

The most agreed upon qualification is “a Black person who can trace their heritage to people enslaved in the U.S. states and territories should be eligible for financial compensation for slavery” (23).

The most common ways that people can trace their heritage:

- Birth records
 - Determine if a person’s ancestors were classified as Black Americans.
- Census records
 - Ensure that one's ancestors consistently self-identified as Black Americans
- Genetic ancestry test results.
 - Determine a person’s lineage, by using certain markers in DNA that are linked to culture and geography; this last method will be heavily discussed throughout this magazine.



Learning About Genetic Ancestry Tests (GATs)

GATs have increased in accessibility and popularity throughout the years, but few of us actually know how these tests work. Keep reading: we'll break down the science and keep it fun!

Key Scientific Terms

WRITTEN BY ELLA BERRY, DESIGNED BY SHANZEY SYED

- Ancestor: a person from whom one is descended; forebear; progenitor.
- Autosomal: occurring on or transmitted by a chromosome other than one of the sex chromosomes.
- Chromatin: the readily stainable substance of a cell nucleus, consisting of DNA, RNA, and various proteins, that forms chromosomes during cell division.
- Chromosome: any of several threadlike bodies, consisting of chromatin, that carry the genes in a linear order.
- DNA: a specialized, usually spherical mass of protoplasm encased in a double membrane, and found in most living eukaryotic cells, directing their growth, metabolism, and reproduction, and functioning in the transmission of genic characters.
- Eukaryotic: of, relating to, or characteristic of a eukaryote, an organism whose basic structural unit is a cell containing specialized organelles and a membrane-bound nucleus.
- Gene: a full set of chromosomes; all the inheritable traits of an organism.
- Genome: a full set of chromosomes; all the inheritable traits of an organism.

- Genotype: the genetic makeup of an organism or group of organisms with reference to a single trait, set of traits, or an entire complex of traits.
- Haplogroup: a set of similar haplotypes inherited together, or a group who shares a set of similar haplotypes, used to understand genetic lineages.
- Maternal: derived or inherited from a mother.
- Mitochondria: an organelle in the cytoplasm of cells that functions in energy production.
- Nucleus: a spherical mass of protoplasm encased in a double membrane, and found in most living eukaryotic cells, directing their growth, metabolism, and reproduction, and functioning in the transmission of genetic characters.
- Paternal: derived or inherited from a father.
- Phenotype: the appearance of an organism resulting from the interaction of the genotype and the environment.
- RNA: any of a class of single-stranded molecules transcribed from DNA in the cell nucleus or in the mitochondrion or chloroplast, containing along the strand a linear sequence of nucleotide bases that is complementary to the DNA strand from which it is transcribed
- Sex-linked: determined by a gene located in a sex chromosome..
- SNPs: a variation in a single base pair in a DNA sequence.

Source for definitions: Dictionary.com. (n.d.). Dictionary.com. Retrieved May 31, 2022, from <https://www.dictionary.com/>

The Basics: What is Genetic Ancestry Testing Really?

By Ella Berry



What it is

In short, genetic ancestry testing is when "genetic data [is] used to estimate the geographic origins of a person's recent ancestors" (25). More specifically, the testing works by comparing DNA variants in one's genome to DNA variants from reference populations worldwide in order to find variations which are most similar. This testing has recently gained popularity as people have become more and more interested in learning about their ancestral roots and potentially connecting with unknown family members.

Where and When These Tests Started

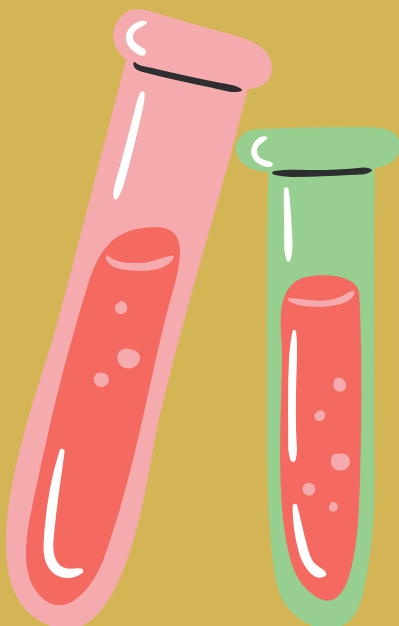
Direct to Consumer Genetic Ancestry Tests first became available to purchase in 2000 (26). However, it took a few more years for the companies currently more well known for their testing kits to start up. 23andMe began marketing their tests in 2008, while AncestryDNA "began selling its DNA ancestry tests in 2012" (27). As popularity of these tests grew, more and more companies were created for the purpose of determining one's ancestry and have continued to sell tests to millions of people since.

What These Tests are primarily used for

Most commonly, genetic ancestry tests are used by everyday consumers curious about their ancestry. The purpose of these tests has been that anyone can have the opportunity to learn more about their past. However, an interest in potential alternative uses for these test results beyond satisfying consumer's curiosity has been raised recently. For example, as this magazine goes over, genetic ancestry tests may have the potential to be used in legal cases. In terms of cases on reparations for slavery specifically, these tests may help to prove that someone descended from a person who was enslaved, and therefore give evidence to support someone as being a candidate to receive reparations.

How These Tests Are Used

There are many steps involved in using these tests. For a detailed walkthrough on the process, flip to page 29.



Compare and Contrast DTC Tests

By: Ella Berry



- Cost (for ancestry test alone): \$99
- Type of test: bundled autosomal, broad Y-DNA and mtDNA haplogroup, health
- Genetic Database: around 2 million people
- Honorable mentions for the company: Unlike the other two tests mentioned, 23andMe also offers health tests (28,29).

- Cost (for ancestry test alone): \$99
- Type of test: autosomal
- Genetic Database: 7 million people
- Honorable mentions for the company: Uses the largest genetic database compared to any other genetic ancestry test company (28,29)



- Cost (for ancestry test alone): \$299 (for either Matriclan or Patriclan test)
- Type of test: mtDNA test or a Y-DNA test
- Genetic Database: more obscure however they mention 30,000 indigenous African American Samples
- Honorable mentions for the company: Specifically look at African American ancestry vs all groups (30).

So you want to learn about your genetic ancestry?

A WALKTHROUGH ON DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER GENETIC TESTS

By Shanzey Syed

Turn to learn more.



STEP 1:

**SELECT A COMPANY
THAT YOU WANT TO
TAKE A TEST WITH.**

(See page 27 for more info.)

STEP 2:

**PURCHASE THE
TEST KIT FROM
THE COMPANY.**

Can either order them online or
purchase them from local
drugstores (CVS, Walgreens,
Walmart Target, etc.).



STEP 3:

FOLLOW DIRECTIONS ON THE BOX.

Most tests will either ask you for saliva or a cheek swab sample.



STEP 4:

MAIL YOUR SAMPLE.

Many companies offer a prepaid shipping label that you can use to ship your sample without additional costs.

STEP 5: COMPANY SCIENTISTS RECEIVE SAMPLE.



Upon receiving your sample, scientists need to remove the “cell debris, proteins, [and] all of the things that are not DNA;” next, they “make copies of your DNA, then break those strands up into shorter chunks” (31). A genotyping array is used to identify which and where SNPs have been inherited. SNPs are inherited, making them useful for determining ethnicity. While these arrays may be up to 99.9% accurate, they are not perfect, and this is why identical twins can have different results from each other.

STEP 6: COMPARING YOUR DNA SAMPLE TO THEIR DATABASES.

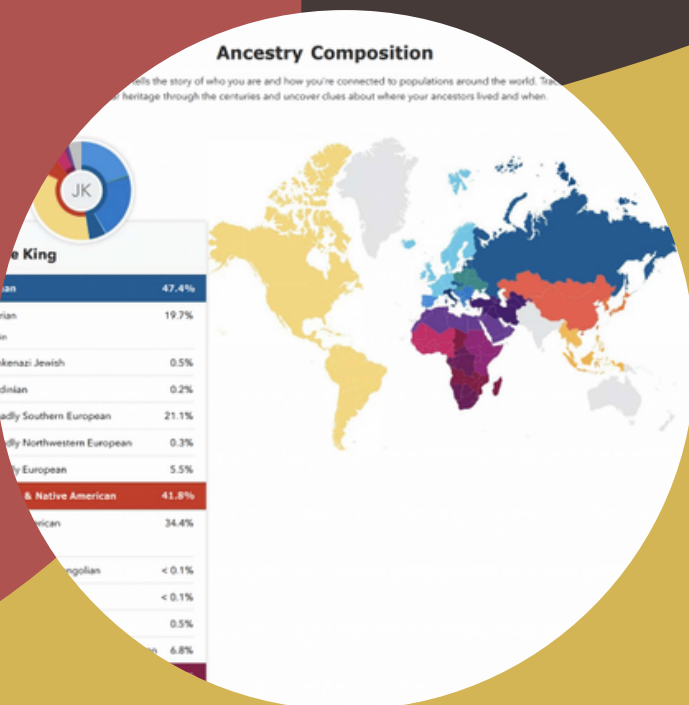
Different tests have different databases that compare your genetic material to, thus your test results can vary depending on what company you take a test from.



STEP 7:

COMPUTER ALGORITHMS TO ANALYZE SAMPLE.

When hearing about DTC genetic test results, we often hear that a person is 13% sub-Saharan African or 43% Eastern European; these percentages are obtained using computer algorithms that look for "a best fit" percentage for the given SNPs your sample contains (31).



STEP 8:

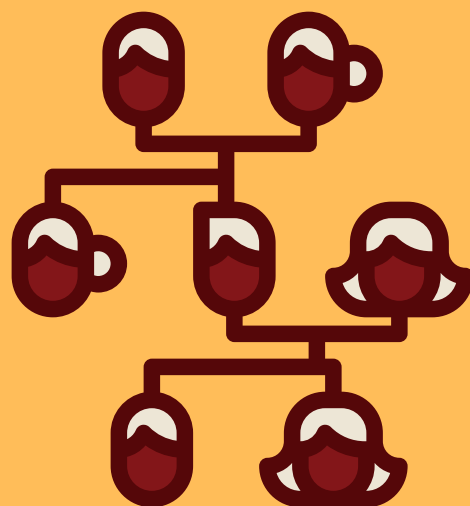
RECEIVE YOUR RESULTS.

Do more research on your assigned ancestries, and share results with family members!

How Do GATs Work and What Do They Really Tell Us?

BY ELLA BERRY AND SHANZEY SYED

Genetic ancestry tests (GATs) work by collecting DNA samples and comparing genetic variation to global databases containing reference populations (25). When a sample contains a trait that is heavily concentrated in one geographic location, it is assumed that the individual taking the test has ancestors from that particular area. The most common ways that we test genetic ancestry is using mitochondrial DNA, Y-chromosome DNA, and single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs), but we discuss this more on page 35.



Determining ancestry is more accurate when test takers' samplers are traced back to broad regions such as sub-East Asia or North Africa (25). When scientists try to narrow down information to specific countries, the tests decline in accuracy. Overall, accuracy is primarily determined by the sample sizes of reference populations that scientists use as a point of reference when comparing DNA samples, but check page 39 for more details!

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THE INFORMATION THAT THEY PROVIDE

Seeing as results can be more or less accurate depending on a variety of factors such as reference group sizes, what type of genetic variations are being compared, and how specific of results the company is attempting to give their consumers, it is understandably confusing to know what the true implications of test results are. Consumers are faced with interpreting their results and deciding to what extent these results will impact their lives and how they self-identify. Often, seeing as these tests are so costly and consumers usually seek them out looking for answers, results are taken seriously. However, seeing as there are limitations with these tests (see page 39), researchers have urged consumers to take their results with a grain of salt. This idea is emphasized even more so due to the fact that “consumers often purchase these tests to learn about their race or ethnicity, but there is no clear-cut connection between an individual's DNA and his or her racial or ethnic affiliation” (32). It is dangerous to make racial and ethnic assumptions based on test results as that has the potential to increase racial essentialism, which is the belief that race is fixed and biological, an idea which is incorrect and has large consequences (33). Therefore, given how these tests work, it is important for those using them to realize that given the current technology, the results they receive are not the 'only right answer'.

The Different Types of Genetic tests

BY SHANZEY SYED

Autosomal DNA tests

Autosomal DNA tests analyze genetic information from most of your DNA (aka the DNA that doesn't come from your sex chromosomes or mtDNA). Geneticists typically test 1 million SNPs out of the 3 billion nucleotides that make up our genetic sequence (34). Though this seems like a large number, it's only 0.0333% of your genetic information. The markers being tested give plenty of information about ancestors from recent generations, but its reliability starts to weaken when you trace back to older generations, since they've only contributed a small percentage to your DNA.

These tests are used to identify individuals that existed a few generations back by analyzing conserved sequences of DNA that were passed on. Though we can use this to determine relatedness between individuals, we cannot determine what the relationship was from DNA alone. For instance, we would not be able to tell apart a person's grandparent or half-sibling based on genetic information alone (34). However, these relationships have been predicted using computer algorithms, but they are not completely accurate without further details.

These tests can help identify a person's ethnicity by comparing their DNA to a genetic database of samples from various ethnic groups. These tests to determine ethnicity are typically referred to as "biogeographical ancestry tests" or "admixture tests" (34). These tests can be accurate for identifying individuals in broad categories such as sub-Saharan African, European, or Native American. However, these tests do have their limitations. For example, they can only be accurate if there is a large and diverse genetic database that the DNA is being compared to. Also, since DNA is randomly inherited, individuals who are closely related may receive very different ethnicity percentages. It also matters what DTC genetic testing company a person receives results from, since they each have their own genetic databases and algorithms that may elicit different results from their competitors.

Y-chromosome tests

Y-chromosome tests only provide information about paternal ancestral history, since Y-chromosomes exist in males but not females. Though these tests cannot be performed on women, they can still learn about the males whom they are related to (fathers, brothers, uncles, etc.). Y-chromosome tests analyze two different types of markers including short tandem repeats (STRs) and single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs); each of these markers mutate at different rates, thus the number and types of markers being tested ultimately shape a person's results (34).

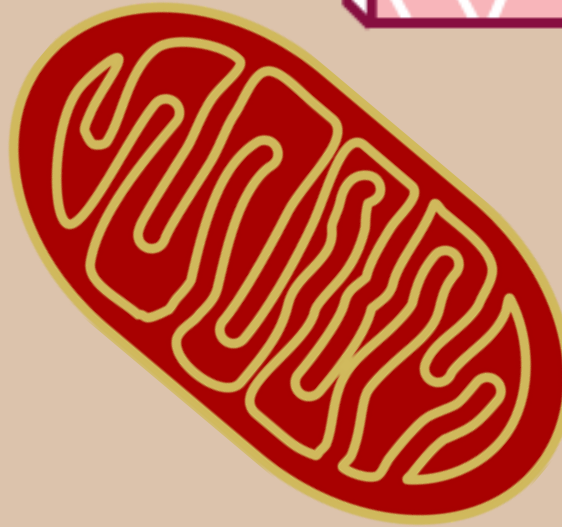
Scientists will often test SNPs in order to determine the haplogroup, a branch of the Y-DNA tree, a person belongs to (34). On the other hand, genetic genealogy is analyzed using Y-STR tests that offer information about paternal lineage or predicted haplogroups (34).

When two individuals share a Y-DNA haplogroup, they typically have a more recent common male ancestor than two individuals from different haplogroups; however, scientists cannot definitely say when this ancestor was alive due to difficulty with achieving accurate time estimates.

When learning about their haplogroups from genetic testing companies, people often learn stories about their ancestors and receive maps of the world with arrows highlighting migration patterns. Though we now have the confidence to say where haplogroups came from and spread to, we should take these stories with caution since these past populations were genetically diverse and different from populations in the same regions today.

The Y-chromosome test is just one way to learn more about one's ancestry, but it becomes less reliable when said ancestor lived a long time ago, since you share a minimal amount of DNA with this individual.





mtDNA tests

Mitochondrial DNA tests tell us information about our maternal ancestry, because mitochondrial DNA is passed on from mothers to all of their offspring. Not only can mtDNA provide information about matrilineal genealogy, but it can also help assign us to haplogroups. These haplogroup assignments may also come with maps of migration patterns, but this information should be taken with a grain of salt. mtDNA has high mutation rates, meaning that it's less likely to provide accurate results about our pasts. The mutation rate of mtDNA genomes in one generation ranges from 1–3%, thus mutations in this type of DNA make it very difficult to tell relatedness between individuals even if the entire mtDNA genome is available (34). In fact, it's quite common for individuals with no relationship to share the exact same mtDNA sequence.

mtDNA testing shares a similar problem to Y-chromosome testing, since the amount of genetic material shared with your ancestors becomes increasingly small when the ancestor lived long ago.

Limitations and Consequences of These Tests

**BY ELLA BERRY &
SHANZEY SYED**

Psychological Impact

While genetic ancestry tests certainly provide some level of information which we wouldn't have had access to without them, it's important nonetheless to look at some of the potential consequences of these tests. Arguably one of the most prevalent consequences these tests can have is a psychological impact. Seeing as these tests are not cheap, often times when purchasing consumers will have certain goals in mind for what these tests might provide them. For example, some go into the tests looking to identify other relatives, find a 'group' which they belong to, iron out family histories and more (32). Meanwhile, others might have the resources to go into the test with unknown expectations. However, in either case, the results of the test can be extremely impactful for an individual. If test results are unexpected they have the potential to make someone question their identity. Questioning one's identity could understandably cause emotional distress. Even if someone is not distressed, an unexpected test result could cause someone to start identifying differently than they previously had (32). Therefore, consumers must be wary of the potential psychological impacts which could arise from the results they get back.

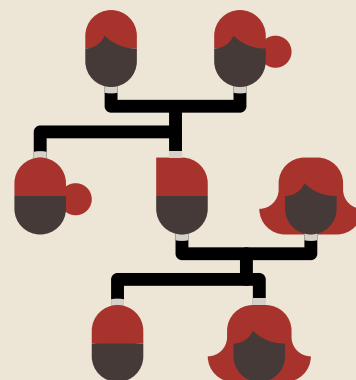
Accuracy of the Tests

DNA tests are extremely beneficial in today's age, since they can tell us a lot about our identities. The most common uses of these tests include learning about your ancestry, determining paternity status, analyzing forensic samples, and participating in biomedical research.

The accuracy of these DTC tests is mostly determined by two things: how large the company's database is and how diverse your ancestry is. Companies that have large databases with many samples from diverse populations tend to be more accurate, since scientists can compare your own sample to a larger data set. However, if companies have a smaller sample size with fewer samples in total or less diverse samples, you may not receive accurate results. For example, if an individual with East Asian ancestry utilizes African Ancestry, a DTC testing company intended for Black communities, they may not receive accurate results due to lack of representation in the company's DNA database (31). In addition, people with lots of intermixture in their backgrounds may have more difficulty tracing their ancestry compared to someone whose entire lineage is linked to one place of origin; however, a company with lots of DNA from different ancestries may be able to provide more accurate results (35).

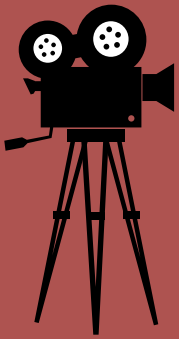
Not only are tests variable between different companies, but they are also variable within the same company. As technology advances and genomic databases become more robust, an individual who took a test from 23andme five years ago could have very different results in 2022 even if they test using the same company (35).

Something important to note is that DTC genetic ancestry tests only tell you how much DNA you've inherited, not where all of your ancestors have lived in the past. Because of this, two siblings could receive different results, despite sharing all of the same relatives because they inherited different amounts of DNA (35). Also, these tests become less reliable the further back you attempt to trace your ancestors. A DNA test likely cannot tell you who your relatives are from over 5 generations ago simply because you did not inherit DNA from them; however, this does not mean that you are not related to them because of what a genetic ancestry test says.



Learning About Genetic Ancestry Through the Media

By: Ella Berry



Celebrities and Genetic Ancestry Test



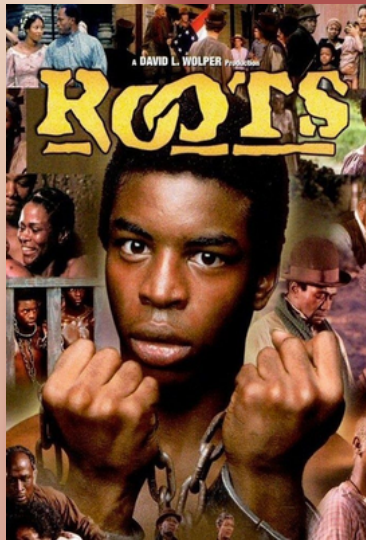
This famous celebrity starred on a PBS series called African American Lives. This show aimed to trace the roots of some famous African American celebrities, which involved them taking genetic ancestry tests. While originally, Oprah received results that she had descended from the Zulu in South Africa, a few years later she took another test and received different results. This test informed her she was 8% Native American, 3% Asian, and 89% sub-saharan African, however not related to the Zulu. This brings up one of the main controversies with these tests surrounding their ability to accurately trace specifics in one's ancestry (36).

Similarly, Snoop Dogg took a genetic ancestry test. After receiving his results he said he was surprised because he had originally believed his only ancestry was from Sub-Saharan African. However, his test results came back saying he was 71% Sub-Saharan African, 23% Native American, and 6% European (37).



Spotlight: Media Recommendations Involving Genetic Testing and Reparations

By: Ella Berry

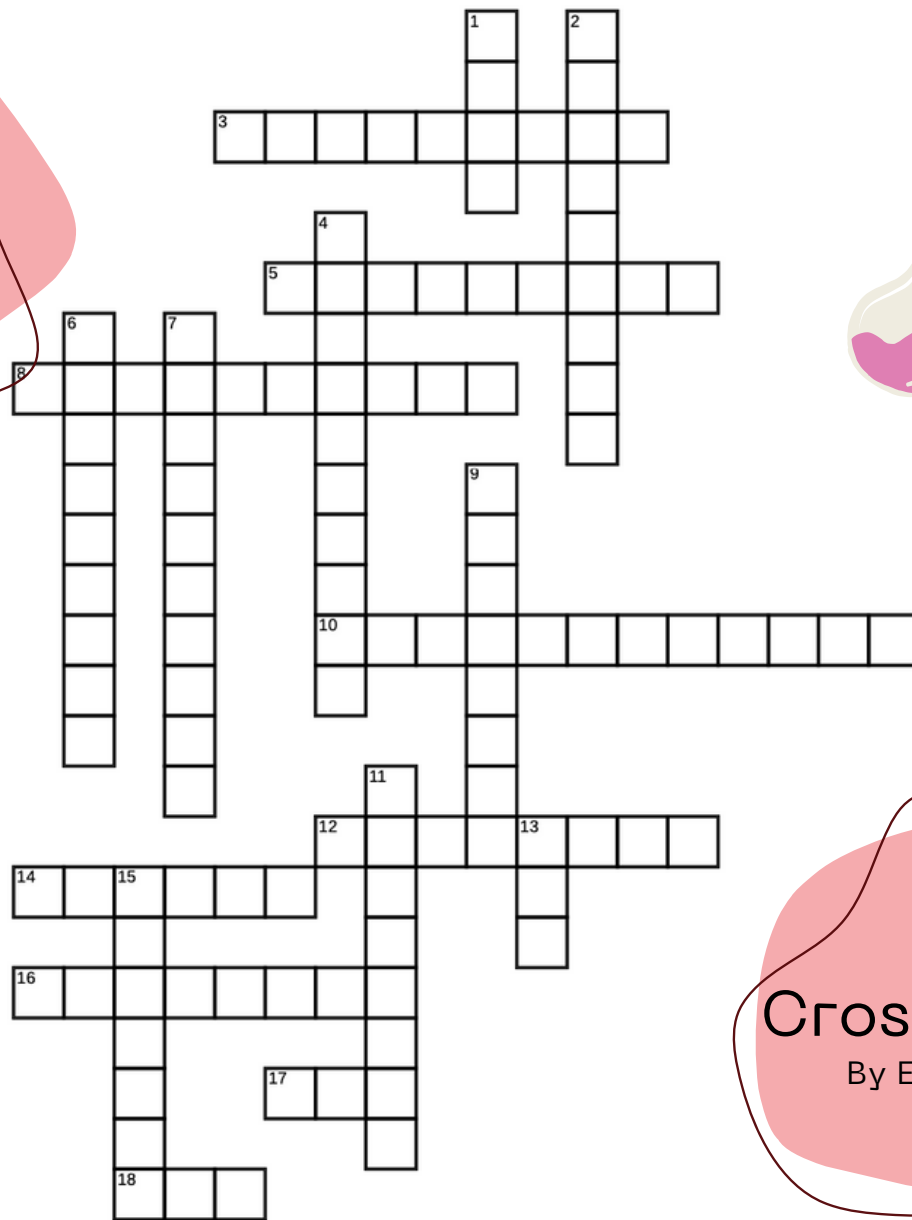


Originally a book written in 1976 by Alex Haley, and later adapted into a tv show, *Roots* tells the story of a young man named Kunta Kinte who was sold into slavery, and then follows his descendants down to the author himself, Alex Haley. To tell this story, Haley has to go on a 'quest' of sorts to uncover his past. As this book and tv show grabbed the attention of the entire nation, it also led to an increased interest in discovering one's own lineage or 'roots', which in turn increased an interest in genetic ancestry testing (38).



Atlanta is a FX show about a college dropout who becomes a manager for his cousin, a rapper who goes by 'Paper Boi.' As they deal with the everyday ups and downs of living in Atlanta, Georgia, this show touches on many current events and issues, often satirizing them along the way. One of these topics is brought up in the episode "The Big Payback", as some white characters become fearful as African Americans begin to demand reparations on an individual lawsuit basis. While meant to be satirical, the episode does touch on the need for reparations, and on genetic ancestry given that characters in the show use their genetic ancestry as a means to file their lawsuits (39).

Science



Crossword!

By Ella Berry

Across

- 3** determined by a gene located in a sex chromosome
- 5** the readily stainable substance of a cell nucleus, consisting of DNA, RNA, and various proteins, that forms chromosomes during cell division
- 8** of, relating to, or characteristic of a eukaryote, an organism whose basic structural unit is a cell containing specialized organelles and a membrane-bound nucleus:
- 10** an organelle in the cytoplasm of cells that functions in energy production
- 12** derived or inherited from a mother
- 14** a full set of chromosomes; all the inheritable traits of an organism
- 16** a person from whom one is descended; forebear; progenitor.
- 17** a specialized, usually spherical mass of protoplasm encased in a double membrane, and found in most living eukaryotic cells, directing their growth, metabolism, and reproduction, and functioning in the transmission of genic characters
- 18** a variation in a single base pair in a DNA sequence

Down

- 1** a full set of chromosomes; all the inheritable traits of an organism
- 2** the appearance of an organism resulting from the interaction of the genotype and the environment
- 4** any of several threadlike bodies, consisting of chromatin, that carry the genes in a linear order
- 6** occurring on or transmitted by a chromosome other than one of the sex chromosomes:
- 7** a set of similar haplotypes inherited together, or a group who shares a set of similar haplotypes, used to understand genetic lineages
- 9** the genetic makeup of an organism or group of organisms with reference to a single trait, set of traits, or an entire complex of traits
- 11** derived or inherited from a father
- 13** any of a class of single-stranded molecules transcribed from DNA in the cell nucleus or in the mitochondrion or chloroplast, containing along the strand a linear sequence of nucleotide bases that is complementary to the DNA strand from which it is transcribed
- 15** a spherical mass of protoplasm encased in a double membrane, and found in most living eukaryotic cells, directing their growth, metabolism, and reproduction, and functioning in the transmission of genic characters



BLACK AMERICAN COMMUNITIES' MISTRUST OF SCIENCE

B: Kelechi Udeze

From a historical perspective, the Tuskegee syphilis study is widely recognized as a reason for mistrust because of the extent and duration of deception and mistreatment and the study's impact on human subject review and approval. However, the history of medical and research abuse of African Americans goes well beyond Tuskegee -- more than four centuries of a biomedical enterprise designed to exploit African Americans is a principal contributor to current mistrust. A 2010 study identified mistrust of researchers and the health care system, fear related to research participation, inadequate information about research and opportunities to participate, inconvenience, questionable reputation of the researcher or research institution, and logistical concerns as barriers to African-American participation in genetics research. Moreover, the literature demonstrates that African Americans report concern that the findings associated with their participation will not benefit the African American community (40). Exploring the application of genetic testing in reparation cases raises hope of regaining African-Americans' trust of medical technology, as those seeking for reparations can find reconciliation from generational trauma.



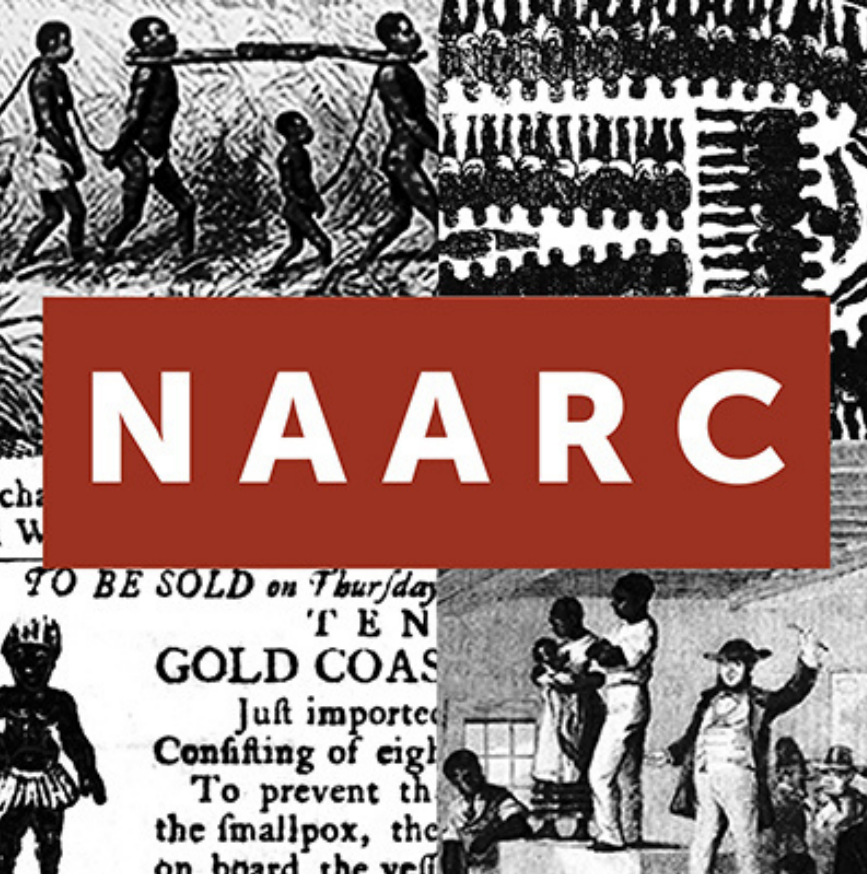
LEGITIMACY OF GENETIC TESTS IN LEGAL SYSTEM

By: Kelechi Udeze

DNA testing can be useful in determining close family relations, leading to reunification. But for deeper family roots, such as descendants of enslaved African-Americans, ancestry tests cannot always tell you where your ancestors came from, just assumptions based on significant proportions of your deep family. In the case of slavery reparations, genetic testing must undergo extensive consideration before being admitted as evidence in court. Defendants have challenged the admissibility of DNA results on the grounds that the protocols or procedures followed by the laboratory were inadequate to reduce the risk of error sufficiently, that the laboratory failed to adhere to the standard protocols, or that the laboratory failed to demonstrate its ability to type samples accurately on a series of external, blind proficiency tests (41).

The legal system often requires more than one qualified expert witness to testify the laboratory techniques, the molecular biological basis, estimation of population frequencies, and the validity of the estimation procedure. In addition, the jury must have a clear understanding of the results and meaning of the DNA evidence. If not, the trier of fact may fail to grasp much of the technical merit of DNA profiling (42).

Jurisdiction recommends behavioral research should be carried out to identify any conditions that might cause a trier of fact to misinterpret evidence on DNA profiling and to assess how well various ways of presenting expert testimony on DNA can reduce such misunderstandings. Accreditation, proficiency-testing, and the opportunity for independent testing (whenever feasible) should be prerequisites to the admission of laboratory findings (41).



NAARC

About:

A group of distinguished lawyers, academics, and activists from across the country with outstanding accomplishments in the fields of law, medicine, journalism, academia, history, civil rights and social justice advocacy.

Contact Info:

Email: info@reparationscomm.org

Phone: 718.429.1415

Donations can be made here online. If physical mail delivery is absolutely necessary, please use the email address above or the contact form on this page to request mailing instructions.

Interested in learning more about filing a lawsuit for reparations? Check out these two organizations.

N'COBRA

NATIONAL COALITION OF BLACKS FOR REPARATIONS IN AMERICA

About

A group of activists working on behalf of 35 million American descendants of enslaved Africans, is preparing to file class action lawsuits against agencies of the federal and state governments.

Contact Info

Mailing Address: P.O. BOX 90604,
Washington, DC, 20090.

Telephone: (202) 643-1460

Email:

info@ncobraonline.org

By: Kelechi Udeze

A Bill for a Brighter Future: H.R. 40

By: Christian Parks



H.R. 40

"A bill to address the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and the 13 American colonies between 1619 and 1865 and to establish a commission to study and consider a national apology and proposal for reparations for the institution of slavery, its subsequent de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against African-Americans, and the impact of these forces on living African-Americans, to make recommendations to the Congress on appropriate remedies, and for other purposes."

The fine print: H.R. 40 would establish a commission to study reparations and demonstrate to Congress the U.S. government's role in the enslavement and systematic disenfranchisement of African Americans. However, the bill does not lay out provisions for the shape the reparations would take, whether in the form of direct cash payments or safety net programs. Despite its open-ended design, getting buy-in from enough lawmakers to tee up a floor vote in even one half of Congress is a tall order.

The background of the page features a stylized, painterly illustration in shades of brown and tan. It depicts several figures, likely representing enslaved people, in a state of distress or labor. Some figures are bent over, while others are standing, all appearing to be connected by chains or ropes. The style is reminiscent of historical art or protest posters.

MOVING FORWARD

BY: KELECHI AND CHRISTIAN

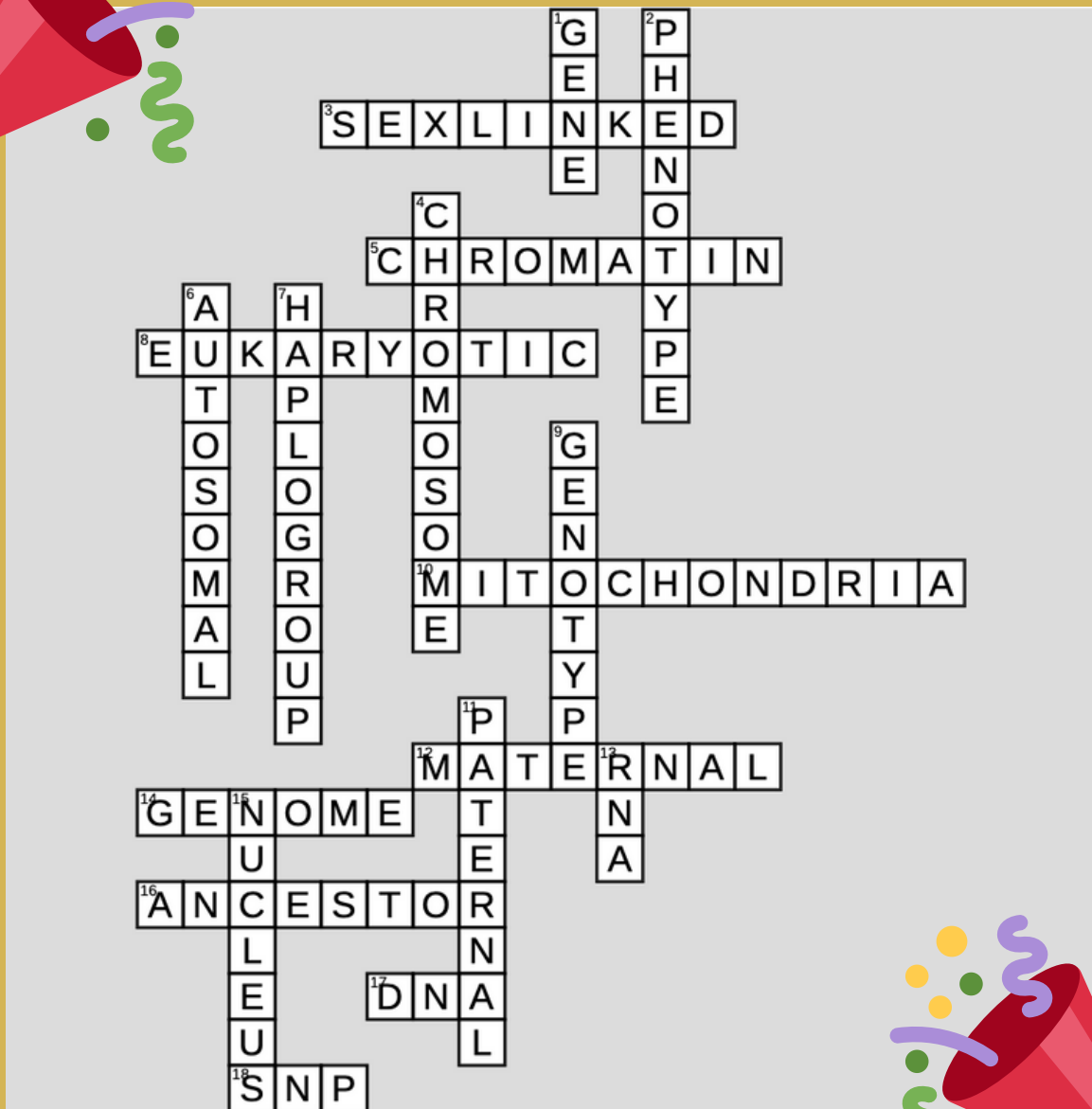
The late civil rights activist and United States Representative, John Lewis said, "A democracy cannot thrive where power remains unchecked and justice is reserved for a select few. Ignoring these cries and failing to respond to this movement is simply not an option — for peace cannot exist where justice is not served" (44).

After 400 years of callous exploitation, it's time to break the cycle, and reparations are a crucial step when it comes to equality for Black folks in the United States. Persons who can trace their ancestry back to those who were enslaved should qualify for reparations. With the ease of access to genetic ancestry tests, African Americans will be able to confirm their heritage to qualify for compensation.

Throughout the course of American history Black folks have been exploited for financial gain, disenfranchised, and alienated when relief packages were administered. It is time to repair the damages and reconstruct the racist systems of America. Reparations are only the start.

Did You Get it Right?:

Crossword Answer key



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