

Children of the Plantation

Slaves in the Family

Submitted by John R Baldwin

Have you done a DNA Test? Do your ethnicity results show a small percentage (e.g., 1% to 3%) of Sub Saharan African ancestry, particularly, West Africa: Cameroon, Congo, Bantu, Ivory Coast, Ghana people? If so, you are not alone. Many thousands of people living in North and South America with predominantly northwest European ancestry have a few percents of West African ethnicities. And, if you have DNA ethnicities in one West African region, it's entirely possible that you will have DNA ethnic matching in border areas such as: Nigeria, Senegal, Benin & Togo.

It's a common misconception that any small percentage of ethnicity in DNA results is probably just "noise". Companies such as Ancestry, 23 and Me, and My Heritage are highly reputable in terms of DNA testing and extremely accurate with ethnicity results at the continental level (e.g., Europe, Africa).

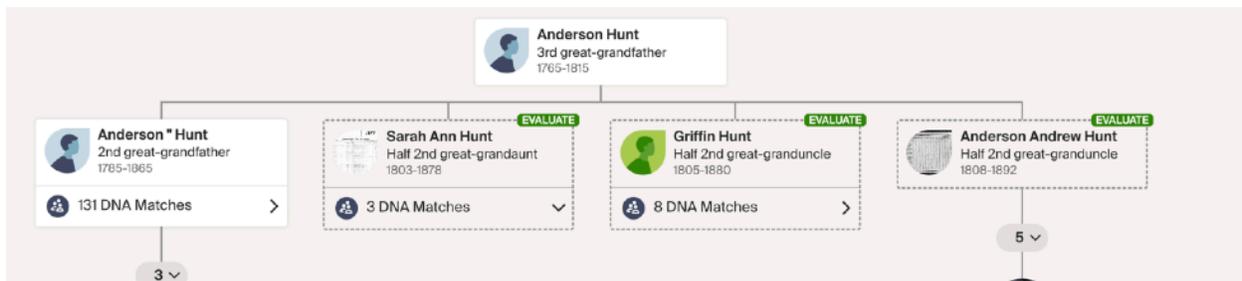
How did this small percent of African ancestry happen? Most likely, African ethnicity originated with an ancestor(s) who was forcibly removed from his/her homeland during the period of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. An estimated 12.5 million people were kidnapped from Africa, shipped to the New World between 1525 and 1866, and sold. Most enslaved people lived on large plantations or small farms. It was common occurrence for slave owners/masters, his relatives, or plantation overseers to rape enslaved women resulting in pregnancies and children (known as, *Children of the Plantation*). Some fathers treated children of mixed ethnicities well, others treated them merely as property.

With this in mind, I will share a recent discovery about my own family. I am a grandson of Anderson Hunt III of Aid Township, Lawrence County (abt.1821- abt.1907. He was the son of Anderson Hunt II of Rowan County, NC (1785-1865). And, he was the son of Anderson Hunt Sr of Mecklenburg County, NC (abt.1765-1815). And, he was the son of Drury Smith (1733-1783) of Henrico County, VA.

Wait - What? Was Anderson Hunt Sr actually born a Smith?

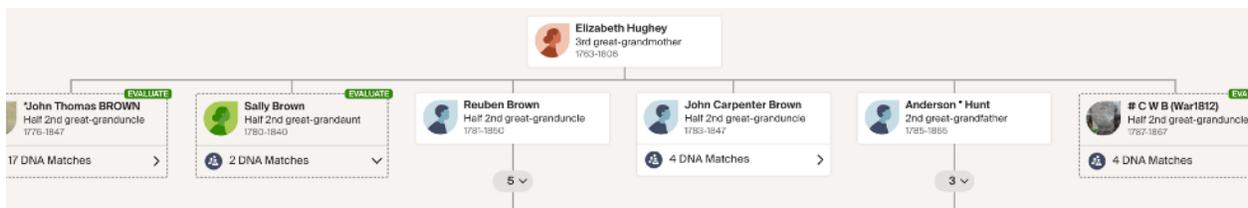
Let's start with the family of Anderson Hunt Sr. It's an accepted fact, supported by DNA Matching, that Anderson Hunt Sr married Elizabeth Hughes (abt.1774-??) in 1794. Anderson and Elizabeth (Hughes) Hunt birthed five known children. However, one of Anderson Hunt's sons, Anderson Hunt Jr, was born about 1785, well before the Elizabeth Hughes marriage. Who was Anderson Hunt Jr's mother? In some family trees Elizabeth Hughes gets mixed up with Elizabeth Hughey (1763-1806). When I added Elizabeth Hughey as the biological mother of Anderson Hunt Jr, here was the result:

Anderson Hunt Sr (abt. 1765-1815):



As can be seen, Anderson Hunt Jr is DNA Match (140+) aligned with three of the children of Anderson Hunt Sr and Elizabeth Hughes at the half great aunt/uncle level. This suggests that Anderson Hunt Jr likely had a different mother than Elizabeth Hughes.

Elizabeth Hughey (1763-1806):



It's a recognised fact that Elizabeth Hughey married John William Brown in 1783. They birthed about 12 children. As can be seen, Anderson Hunt Jr is DNA Match (25+) aligned with five of the children of John William Brown and Elizabeth Hughey at the half great aunt/uncle level. Further, I have 50+ DNA Matches with the documented parents of Elizabeth Hughey.

I surmise that there was a sexual liaison, consensual or otherwise, between Anderson Hunt Sr and Elizabeth Hughey about 1785 in the Rowan County, NC area. She became pregnant with Anderson Hunt Jr.

How about the parents of Anderson Hunt Sr? This is where things get even more interesting. Because Anderson Hunt Jr was born in an isolated event (see above), and because his father Anderson Hunt Sr, seems also to have been born as an isolated event, and knowing that these two individuals were involved with and/or closely associated with slave ownership, I started wondering about their true ethnicities. Might Anderson Hunt Sr have had an enslaved African mother (see above)?

On a hunch, I started researching, individually, the many known DNA matches to the three Anderson Hunt ancestors - Anderson Hunt Sr, Anderson Hunt Jr, Anderson Hunt III. There are hundreds of these matches. These men fathered many children. I checked the ethnicities (Ancestry.com DNA) of Anderson Hunt matches. Below is a sample:

A sample of Direct Descendants of Anderson Hunt Jr with West African ethnicity:

1. 3rd Cousin - Ivory Coast & Ghana @ 1% / Nigeria, @ 1%

2. 2nd Cousin - Cameroon, Congo, Western Bantu Peoples @ 1%
3. 2nd Cousin - Cameroon, Congo, Western Bantu Peoples @ 1%
4. 2nd cousin - Cameroon, Congo, Western Bantu Peoples @ 1% / Nigeria @ 1%
5. 3rd Cousin - Ivory Coast & Ghana @ 2%
6. 2nd Cousin - Cameroon, Congo, Western Bantu Peoples @ 1% / Nigeria @ 1%
7. 3rd Cousin - Cameroon, Congo, Western Bantu Peoples @ 1%
8. 3rd Cousin - Cameroon, Congo, Western Bantu Peoples @ 2% / Benin & Togo @ 1%
9. 2nd Cousin - Cameroon, Congo, Western Bantu Peoples @ 1%
10. 3rd Cousin - Cameroon, Congo, Western Bantu Peoples @ 1%

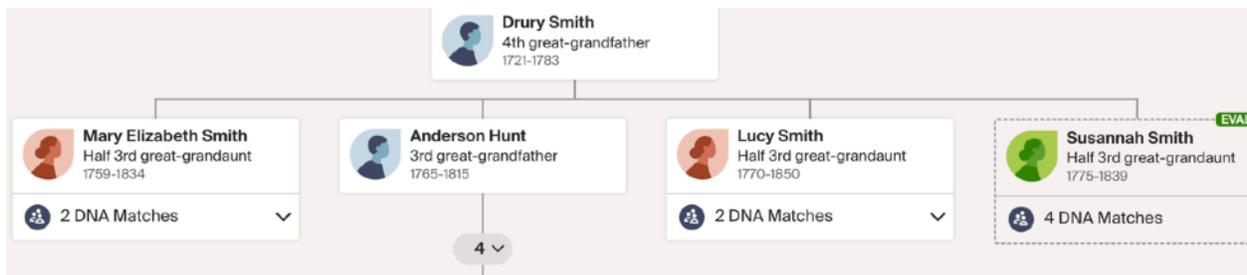
Of course, not all of the ancestors of the Anderson Hunts have the West Africa ethnicity signature (I don't, for example). But, I estimate that about 40-50% do have the signature, enough to be statistically significant. Therefore, I surmise that somewhere in the Anderson Hunt family lineage, there likely was a West African grandparent, likely a female, based on historical knowledge.

DNA Matching and family tree traditions, suggest that Anderson Hunt Sr was associated (his biological parents?) with Memucan Hunt (1729-1808) and Mary Ann Wade (1736-1825). This family is well documented in the historic record. And, it's a documented fact that Memucan and Mary Hunt owned slaves. In his 1808 will, Memucan named at least 35 slaves who were to be redistributed to his children. Memucan's children were individually named in his will. Anderson Hunt Sr was NOT mentioned in any way. How did he fit in to this family?

One of Memucan Hunt's daughters, Mary Hunt, married a gentleman named "Anderson" Smith. Anderson Smith (1758-1820) was the only son of Drury Smith (abt.1721-abt.1783) and Mary Anderson (abt.1738 - abt.1783). Anderson Smith is well documented in the historic record and was an owner of slaves.

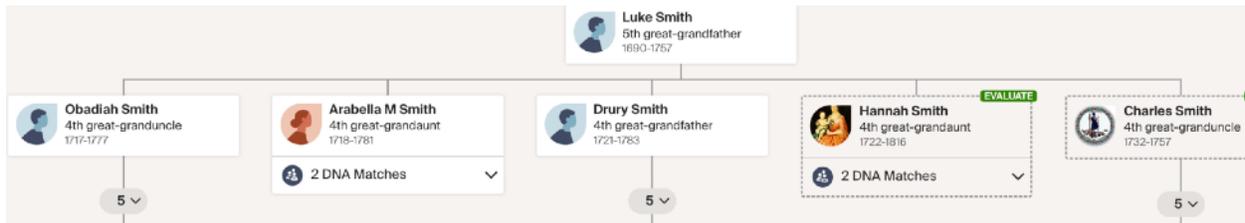
Since the first name of "Anderson" is somewhat unique. And, knowing that there was a Hunt family reference to that name on the Drury Smith line, on a hunch, I added Drury Smith (and his children) to my tree and assigned him as a 4th grandfather.

Drury Smith (abt.1721- abt.1783):



As can be seen, Anderson Hunt Sr DNA Match aligns with the children of Drury Smith (8 matches) at the half 3rd great grand aunt/uncle level. This suggests that Anderson Hunt Sr was a biological son of Drury Smith but not a son of Mary Anderson.

Luke Smith (father of Drury) (1690-abt.1757):



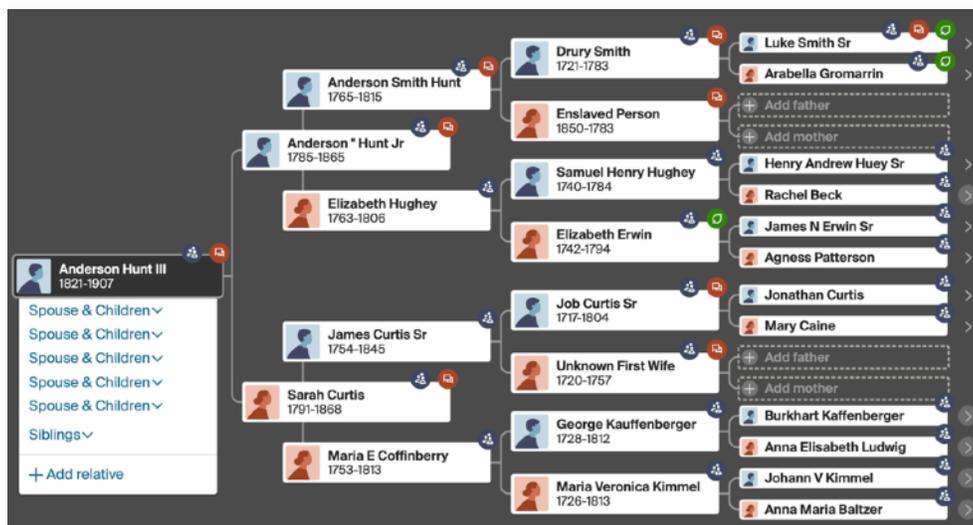
As can be seen, four of the siblings of Drury Smith (6 matches) DNA Match align at the full 4th great grand aunt/uncle level. Thus, it's clear that this Drury Smith ancestral line is where Anderson Hunt Sr originated.

So, who might be the mother of Anderson Hunt Sr, the slave of Drury Smith? Of course, it's unlikely we will ever know for sure. However, I do have a theory.

Per the Will of Drury Smith, Mary Smith, a daughter of Drury and wife of Obadiah Britt, inherited slaves named Cate and her son Jeff in 1782. Might Jeff have been the original name for Anderson Hunt Sr? Somehow, Jeff was given over to the Hunt's (Memucan?) in the 1760/70's (perhaps through Drury Smith's son Anderson Smith who was married to Sarah Hunt, daughter of Memucan Hunt), whereupon he gained the surname Hunt and the first name Anderson and made to be a freeman - possibly based on his light skin colour. It could be that Anderson Hunt Sr's skin colour was lighter because his mother was also a child of a white master.

Interestingly, there were several other historically documented Anderson Hunt's who were black and living in Ohio, before and after the Civil War years. Were these gentlemen also related to our Hunt ancestral line in some way; children of white Hunt family slave owners? As always, more research is needed.

Anderson Hunt Family Tree (Ver. 2024):



UPDATE:

An Indenture Deed between Memucan Hunt and wife Mary and Anderson Hunt, dated August 15, 1789 has been found. What is an Indenture?

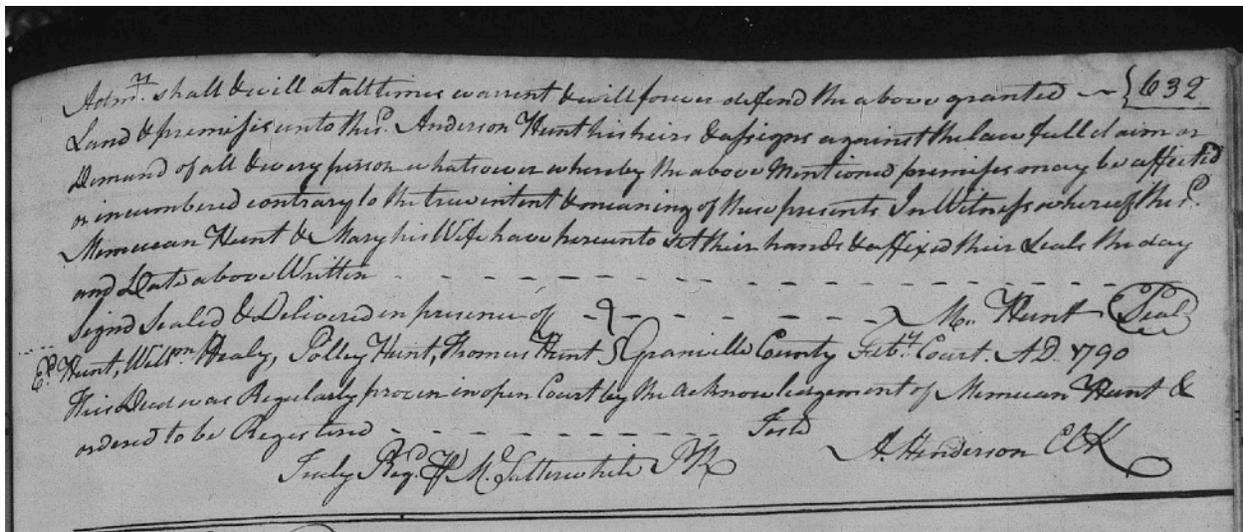
According to Wikipedia:

An indenture is a legal contract between two parties, particularly for indentured labour or a term of apprenticeship but also for certain land transactions. The term comes from the medieval English "indenture of retainer"—a legal contract written in duplicate on the same sheet, with the copies separated by cutting along a jagged (toothed, hence the term "indenture") line so that the teeth of the two parts could later be refitted to confirm authenticity (chirograph). Each party to the deed would then retain a part. When the agreement was made before a court of law a tripartite indenture was made, with the third piece kept at the court. The term is used for any kind of deed executed by more than one party, in contrast to a deed poll which is made by one individual. In the case of bonds, the indenture shows the pledge, promises, representations and covenants of the issuing party.

This 1789 Indenture may in fact have been the moment when Anderson Hunt became a freedman and land owner. According to the document (see next page), Anderson paid the sum of five Shillings (about \$25 in today's US dollars) for about 143 acres of land along the Tar River in Granville County, NC. This document supports the theory that Anderson was an adopted son of Memucan and Mary Hunt.

*Memucan Hunt
To
Mary his wife
Anderson Hunt*

This Indenture made this Fifteenth day of August in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred & eighty nine Between Memucan Hunt & Mary his wife of the County of Granville & State of North Carolina of the one part & Anderson Hunt of the other Witnesseth that this Memucan Hunt & Mary his wife for & in consideration of the Natural love and affection which they bear to this Anderson Hunt especially for & in the consideration of the sum of five Shillings proclamation Money to them in hand paid by this Anderson Hunt the Receipt whereof they do hereby acknowledge themselves thereunto satisfied contented & paid hath given granted bargained & sold unto this Anderson Hunt one certain tract or parcel of Land lying & being in the County of Granville aforesaid & on the North side of Tar River containing by estimation one hundred and forty three acres be the same more or less. It being the Land whereon Elizabeth Williams Dec^d formerly lived & which was bequeathed by the last Will & Testament of William Williams Dec^d to his Son Stephen Williams & by this Stephen transferred to Thomas Cletcher by Deed of Trust & by Virtue of this Dec^d of Trust sold by this Thomas Cletcher to this Memucan Hunt & by this said Memucan Hunt to this Anderson Hunt together with all Houses Orchards timbers profits and appurtenances whatsoever to this Land belonging or in anywise appertaining to this Anderson Hunt his heirs & assigns forever to the only proper use & behoof of him this Anderson Hunt his heirs & assigns forever & this Memucan Hunt & Mary his wife for themselves their heirs & assigns & doth here by Covenant & agree that they this Memucan Hunt & Mary his wife their heirs



OCR Text (w/corrections):

This Indenture made this Fifteenth day of August in the year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred & Eighty Nine Between Memucan Hunt Hunt & Mary his wife of the County of Granville & State of North Carolina of the one part & **Anderson Hunt** of the other Witnesseth that this Memucan Hunt & Mary his Wife for in consideration of the natural love and affection which they bear to Anderson & more especially for in the consideration of the sum of five Shillings proclamation money to them in hand paid by the said Anderson Hunt the receipt whereof they do hereby acknowledge & themselves therewith satisfied contented & paid hath given granted bargained & sold unto the said **Anderson Hunt** one Certain Tract or parcel of Land lying & being in the County of Granville aforesaid & on the North side of Tar River containing by estimation One Hundred and forty three acres be the same more or less. It being the Land whereon Elizabeth Williams Decd and formerly lived & which was bequeathed by the last Will & Testament of William Williams Decd to his Son Stephen Williams by the said Stephen transferred to Thomas Kitcher by Deed of Trust of Virtue of the said Deed of Trust sold by the said Thomas Kitcher to the said Memucan Hunt and by the said Memucan Hunt to the said **Anderson Hunt** together with all Houses Orchards timbers profits and appurtenances whatsoever to said land and belonging or in anywise appertaining to the said Anderson Hunt his heirs & assigns forever to the only proper use & behoof of him there **Anderson Hunt** his heirs assigns forever & the said Memucan Hunt & Mary his Wife for themselves their heirs Ex doth hereby Covenant & agree that they the said Memucan Hunt & Mary his Wife their heirs Ex Admr shall & will at all times warrant & will forever defend the above granted Land & premises unto this **Anderson Hunt** his heirs & assigns against the lawful claim or demand of all & every person whatsoever whereby the above mentioned premises may be affected or encumbered contrary to the true intent & meaning of these presents In Witness whereof the said Memucan Hunt & Mary his Wife have hereunto set their hands & affixed their Seals the day and Date above Written

Signed Sealed & Delivered in presence of - - - M. Hunt
Willm Healy, Polley Hunt, Thomas Hunt Granville County Feb Court AD 1790 This Deed
was Regularly proven in open Court by the acknowledgement of Memucan Hunt &
ordered to be Registered - Sixth Truly Regd J. M. Satterwhite J W A. Henderson
Henderson Clk

Citation:

"Granville, North Carolina, United States records," images, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9C5-ZSZH?view=explore> : Apr 4, 2024), image 505 of 524

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