

DNA from unmarked graves of slaves could lead to modern descendants

The cemetery of the enslaved workers of the [Catoclin] iron furnace was rediscovered in 1979 — 116 years after Abraham Lincoln read the Emancipation Proclamation and potentially even longer since the enslaved people of Catoclin Furnace were sold or freed.

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[Recently], new light was shed on who they are.

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On Feb. 21, 2017, [researcher David] Reich traveled to Washington, D.C., and collected samples from the bones of 14 of the Catoclin Furnace slaves.

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[T]he Catoclin Furnace Historical Society is continuing its own work by putting together a “census of slaves” using historical records to identify family units and jobs assigned at the furnace. The research has been hampered in extending the genealogy into the future, because of the lack of last names.

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Now, with a pool of ancient DNA results, the historical society is going to load the existing genetic profiles of each of the enslaved people to 23andMe — a website and genetic testing company that analyzes people’s 23 chromosomes, which store all of a person’s genetic information. There they will be able to see if the genetic code of one of the slaves matches a person living today — with the hope to connect someone to their ancestor.

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Despite all their findings, the biggest question remains: Who were they? And, for now, that is still unclear.

Read full, original post: [DNA research opens door to match slaves with relatives](#)