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GMP Ancestor: n/a
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Related Codes: GMP-071, GMP-072, GMP-098, GMP-115, GMP-117

Purpose: To present research on men named Dan West

Discussion:

Several persons with the surname West are found among the GU272. Among them are siblings Augustin West (GMP-071) and Adelpia West (GMP-072), who were enslaved on Jesse Batey's plantation on Bayou Maringouin, later known as West Oak. Additionally, it is uncertain whether Sam Harris's (GMP-098) wife, Betsy (GMP-117), was surnamed West or Ware (see GMP Report JR0002). At least three distinct individuals named Dan West are found in the Maringouin and Pointe Coupee area. One was born ca. 1851-60, one ca. 1880, and one ca. 1906. Their relationship to each other is unknown. This report presents information found on these three individuals and discusses potential connections to the GU272 West families.

Dan West #1

The oldest of the three men named Dan West was born ca. 1851-60. He is first found on the 1880 Pointe Coupee Parish census living in the household of Victoran and Elvira Joseph. Also in the household was Lucenta Wylie. The census reports that Dan West was age 20 (born ca. 1860), a laborer, born in Louisiana, and his parents were born in Louisiana.¹ He cannot be identified on the 1870 census. He is most likely the same Dan West who was married in Pointe Coupee Parish 31 January 1883 to Elisar Dicur (i.e., Eliza Decuir). The minister was A. Givens and the witnesses were Harris Jones and Charls Bashful.² This assumption is based on the 1870 census where Charles "Bashford" is listed on the same census page as Cynthia Wiley, likely the same person as Lucenta Wylie listed in the 1880 household with Dan West.³

"Den" West and wife Eliza are found on the 1900 census of Pointe Coupee. Den West was born in December of 1851 in Louisiana and his parents were born in Louisiana. He and Eliza had been married 17 years and Eliza had given birth to 12 children, four of whom were living. The eldest child, Numa Decuir, is identified as Den's stepson. The five West children in the household are Celestine (born March 1882), Emilia (born August 1883), Eliska (born September 1885), Martha (born February 1895), and Gertrude (born January 1899).⁴ Eliza was not, however, the mother of the two oldest West daughters. Celestine's mother has not been identified, but the mother of the

second daughter was a woman named Marie Hilaire.⁵

By 1910, Dan and Eliza West had moved their family to Erwinville in West Baton Rouge Parish and in 1920, they were living in East Baton Rouge Parish.⁶ Dan West died in 1923 in South Baton Rouge. The informant on his death certificate, Amelia Norman, identified Dan's parents as Edward West, born in Virginia, and Christeen, born in Lakeland, Louisiana.⁷ No good match could be found for Edward West among the GU272.

Dan West #2

The second Dan West was born ca. 1880. He could not be identified on the 1900 census. He died in 1906 at the age of 26. His burial record dated 3 September 1906 at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Grosse Tete, identifies him as Dan West, Jr., age 26, of Maringouin.⁸ His parentage could not be established, however, the burial record identifying him as a Junior establishes his father as Dan West, Sr. Dan West #1 was of an age to have been his father, however, no direct evidence supporting this has yet been found.

Dan West #3

The third Dan West was born ca. 1906. His mother was Anna Givens. Anna Givens is first found on the 1900 Pointe Coupee Parish census living in the household of her uncle Louis Walker. She was age 12, born in August 1888.⁹ In 1910, Anna Givens is found living in the household of her nephew, also named Louis Givens. She was age 26, a widow, and her two children were Viola West (born ca. 1904), and Daniel West (born ca. 1906).¹⁰ The marriage license of Viola West identifies her parents as Dan West and Anna Givens.¹¹ Note that A. Givens was the minister at the marriage of Dan West #1 to Eliza Decuir.

Dan West could not be located on the 1920 census, however, around 1930, he was married to Ethel Beatrice Knighten. This marriage record has not yet been located. In 1930 and 1940, Dan and Ethel were living in Pointe Coupee Parish. In 1930, they had one son, Leonard West, age 8(?) months.¹² In 1940, three children were in the household—Dan, Jr. (born ca. 1933), Louis (born ca. 1934), and Joseph (born ca. 1936).¹³ Leonard apparently died in childhood. Dan West, Sr., died 11 March 1980 in Baton Rouge. His obituary indicates he was a native and resident of Maringouin, Louisiana. He was survived by his wife, Ethel B. West; two sons, Joe West and Robert Patterson, Sr.; sister Mrs. Viola Crawford; and a brother, James Smith, Sr.¹⁴

A descendant of Dan's son Louis West (born 1934) was found on Ancestry. She was a DNA match to numerous confirmed GU272 descendants, including one descendant of Augustin West at 47 cM. Augustin West (GMP-071) and his wife, Eliza Queen (GMP-115), had at least eight children, born between 1849 and 1869. Their two known sons were Leonard West, born ca. 1853 (note that Dan West #3 named his oldest son Leonard), and Louis West, born 1858. Both sons lived in Pointe Coupee Parish for some period of time. Leonard West (born ca. 1853) was married to Polly Simmons and had 11 known children, born between 1872 and 1892. Louis West (born 1858) was married to Delia Skipper. In 1900, they had two children in their household, Jules and Stella, but

they may have been Delia's from a previous marriage.

Of Leonard West and Polly Simmons' 11 children, six were sons. The four oldest were a likely age to have fathered Viola and Dan. They were: Leonard West, Jr. (born ca. 1876); Ben West (born ca. 1878); David "Dave" West (born ca. 1883); and Joseph West (born ca. 1888). Leonard West, Jr., moved from Pointe Coupee to St. Landry Parish sometime between 1900 and 1910. He was married to a woman named Alice, apparently had no children, and died in Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1926.¹⁵ Ben West cannot be located on the census after 1880. David "Dave" West was married in 1900 to Estella Thompson in West Baton Rouge Parish, where they lived together as husband and wife at least until 1920.¹⁶ If Dave fathered Viola and Dan, then he did so while married to Estella and while living in another parish. Finally, Joseph West would have been a teenager when Viola and Dan were born and a few years younger than their mother, Anna Givens. It seems unlikely that Joseph was their father.

Another possibility for the father of Viola and Dan, and the best candidate, is Dan West #2, who died in 1906, the same year that Dan West, Jr., was born. Although no marriage record was found for Anna Givens to anyone named West, she was listed as a widow on the 1910 census. If this Dan West, born ca. 1880, was the father of Viola and Dan, the question remains as to if and how he was related to the Augustin West family.

Among the six sons of Leonard West and Polly Simmons, the closest match in age and name to Dan West #2 (born ca. 1880) is Ben West (born ca. 1878). As previously mentioned, Ben West could not be located on the 1900 or subsequent censuses. The two were approximately the same age, and the name Dan could have been mistaken by the census taker for Ben. Note that Dan West #1 is identified as "Den" West on the 1900 census. Also note that names of other people in the West household in 1880 were badly garbled (e.g., Nane for Leonard, Sally for Polly, and Lane for Leonard). As previously noted, Dan West #3 named one son Leonard and one Louis.

Conclusion:

While the DNA matches between a descendant of Dan West #3 to numerous GU272 descendants are compelling, the documentary evidence is not sufficient to establish Dan West #3 as a GU272 descendant.

Endnotes:

1. 1880 U.S. census, Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana, pop. sched., Ward 8, Enumeration District 56, p. 428B (stamped), family #262, citing National Archives microfilm publication T9.
2. Pointe Coupee Parish Marriages, 1881, #391, New Roads, La.

3. 1870 U.S. census, Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana, pop. sched., Ward 8, p. 390B (stamped), family #207 and #209, citing National Archives microfilm publication M593.
4. 1900 U.S. census, Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana, pop. sched., Ward 8, Enumeration District 70, p. 179A-B (stamped), family #321, citing National Archives microfilm publication T623.
5. Baptismal record of Marie Amelia West, daughter of Dan West and Marie Hilaire, born 31 August 1883, baptized 27 November 1883 at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Chenal, Louisiana, sponsors Henri Joseph and Augustine Jones, *Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic Church Records, Volume 16, 1883-1885* (Baton Rouge: Diocese of Baton Rouge, 1996), p. 561.
6. 1910 U.S. census, West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, pop. sched., Erwinville, Enumeration District 141, p. 223A (stamped), family #154, citing National Archives microfilm publication T624, and 1920 U.S. census, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, pop. sched., Ward 8, Enumeration District 38, p. 131A (stamped), family #28, citing National Archives microfilm publication T625.
7. Statewide Deaths, 1923, vol. 4, #1438, Louisiana State Archives, Baton Rouge, La.
8. St. Joseph Catholic Church, Grosse Tete, Louisiana, Burial Book 1904-1954 (SJGT-13), p. 101, Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic Church Archives, Baton Rouge, La.
9. 1900 U.S. census, Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana, pop. sched., Ward 10, Enumeration District 73, p. 264A (stamped), family #666, citing National Archives microfilm publication T623.
10. 1910 U.S. census, Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana, pop. sched., Ward 10, Enumeration District 85, p. 275A (stamped), family #319, citing National Archives microfilm publication T624.
11. Viola West identified her parents as Dan West and Anna Givens in her marriage record to Ivory Crawford, son of Nathan Crawford and Agnes Devine, 3 January 1929, by Rev. J.S. Minor. Witnesses were Peter Monroe, R.L. Ramsy, Rose Lee Parker. Marriage Book 15, p. 336bis, Iberville Parish, Clerk of Court, Plaquemine, La.
12. 1930 U.S. census, Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana, pop. sched., Ward 10, Enumeration District 14, p. 228B (stamped), family #280, citing National Archives microfilm publication T626.
13. 1940 U.S. census, Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana, pop. sched., Ward 10, Enumeration District 13, p. 294A (stamped), family #301, citing National Archives microfilm publication T627.
14. *Morning Advocate*, Baton Rouge, La., 14 March 1980.

15. Statewide Deaths, 1926, vol. 13, #5643, Louisiana State Archives, Baton Rouge, La.
16. Iris Allain LeJeune, *West Baton Rouge Parish Marriage Records, 1807-1915* (n.p.: West Baton Rouge Genealogical Society, n.d.), p. 133.