



Report Number: JR0002
GMP Ancestor: Betsy Ware or West (GMP-117)
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Related Codes: GMP-070, GMP-071, GMP-072, GMP-073, GMP-098, GMP-106, GMP-115, GMP-194, GMP-206

Purpose: To present evidence regarding the maiden name of Betsy, wife of Sam Harris.

Discussion:

Betsy (GMP-117) is identified on the 1838 Sale Agreement as the wife of Sam.¹ The GMP has identified him as Sam Harris (GMP-098). Sam and Betsy were enslaved on the Jesuits' St. Thomas Manor in Charles County, Maryland.² No mention of Betsy's maiden name has been found in the Maryland records, however, two different surnames were provided in Louisiana records.

The first document is the 1917 death certificate of Sam and Betsy's daughter, Louisa Harris Davis.³ The informant, Arnold Scott, provided the names of her parents as Sam Harris and Betsy Ware, both born in Maryland.

The second document is the 1916 marriage license of Sam and Betsy's son, Edward Harris, to Easter Banks.⁴ For the marriage record, Edward Harris identified his parents as Sam Harris and Betsy West. Edward presumably provided the information himself and appears to have signed the document. Edward Harris's 1928 death certificate does not identify his parents.⁵

The death certificate of only one other child of Sam and Betsy Harris has been found. The 1922 death certificate of Alice Harris Murphy identifies her parents as Sam Harris and Betsy Harris, both born in Louisiana. The informant was Mrs. Hy. Coates, whose identity is unknown.⁶

The two above-mentioned informants, Arnold Scott and Edward Harris, were compared. Edward Harris was about three years older, born around 1855, while Arnold Scott was born around 1858. Arnold Scott was not a blood relative of either Sam or Betsy. His parents, however, were Jesuit slaves, but his father, Alexius Scott (GMP-194), was from Newtown Manor and his mother, Ann Butler (GMP-206), was from St. Inigoes. The Scotts and Butlers were enslaved on the same Louisiana plantation as Sam and Betsy Harris on Bayou Maringouin and the families undoubtedly knew each other. Arnold Scott's daughter, Signora Scott, was married to an unknown Harris man who was likely a grandson of Sam and Betsy Harris. Furthermore, Arnold Scott was familiar with the West family, as he had a child with Nancy Eliza West, daughter of Augustin West (GMP-071)

and Eliza Queen (GMP-115), also Jesuit slaves. Considering all these family connections, Arnold Scott likely had some second-hand knowledge of Sam and Betsy Harris.

Edward Harris's declaration that his mother was a West should carry greater weight than the declaration of a non relative. However, Edward was over 60 years old at the time he provided the information for his marriage record and it is possible that he made a mistake. Both surnames are four letters and start with a W. Furthermore, the name West was likely more well known in the Maringouin area than the name Ware.

The 1838 Jesuit Slave Census provides the origins of the West and Ware families in Maryland. One individual named Ware is found at St. Thomas Manor, the same Jesuit plantation where Sam and Betsy Harris were enslaved. William Ware (GMP-106), whose parents are unknown, was born around 1820. Betsy, born around 1817, was about three years older than William, suggesting a possible sibling relationship. William Ware was sold to Henry Johnson⁷ while Sam and Betsy were sold to Jesse Batey.⁸ The two men had adjoining plantations on Bayou Maringouin where Sam, Betsy, and William were initially placed in 1838. A few years later, however, William Ware was sent to Johnson's plantation in Ascension Parish (later known as Chatham), while the Harrises remained on Bayou Maringouin. Arnold Scott and Edward Harris were born many years after William Ware was sent to Ascension, so it is unlikely that either of them knew him personally.

One family named West is found at the Jesuits' White Marsh Farm, located in Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties. It consisted of Betsy (GMP-070) and her four children, who went by the surname West. Betsy, a widow, is believed to have run away in Maryland with a free man named James Queen around 1838.⁹ Her four West children, however, were sent to Louisiana along with Sam and Betsy Harris and enslaved at Bayou Maringouin, two on Batey's plantation and two on Johnson's. Betsy Harris could have been related to the other Betsy's late West husband, but no records to support this supposition have been found.

The DNA matches of numerous descendants of Sam and Betsy Harris were also studied. Their results were compared to the results of descendants of William Ware (GMP-106), Augustin West (GMP-071), Adelpia West (GMP-072), and Christina West (GMP-073). Results were mixed with all showing matches to some of the Harris descendants. Due to endogamy among the GU272, it is difficult to isolate shared ancestors.

Conclusion:

The evidence supporting Betsy's surname as Ware is the existence of one other person with the surname Ware at St. Thomas Manor, the same Jesuit plantation in Maryland where Sam and Betsy Harris were enslaved, and the statement by a non-relative on the death certificate of Sam and Betsy's daughter. The evidence supporting the name West is the fact that Betsy's own son provided the name of his mother on his marriage license. The DNA matches support both surnames. Therefore, the GMP cannot yet conclude whether Betsy's maiden name was Ware or West. Further research and evidence is needed.

Endnotes:

1. "Articles of Agreement between Thomas F. Mulledy, of Georgetown, District of Columbia, of one part, and Jesse Beatty (sic) and Henry Johnson, of the State of Louisiana, of the other part, 19th June 1838," Maryland Province Archives (MPA), Box 40, File 10, Item 3a-h, Booth Family Center for Special Collections, Lauinger Library, Georgetown University, online at the [Georgetown Slavery Archive](#).
2. "Census of slaves to be sold in 1838," MPA, Oversize Box 4 (WO 112), Booth Family Center for Special Collections, Lauinger Library, Georgetown University, online at the [Georgetown Slavery Archive](#).
3. Statewide Deaths, 1922, vol. 16, #7137, Louisiana State Archives, Baton Rouge, La.
4. Marriage Book 10, #425, Iberville Parish Clerk of Court, Plaquemine, La.
5. Statewide Deaths, 1928, vol. 32, #14287, Louisiana State Archives, Baton Rouge, La.
6. Statewide Deaths, 1922, vol. 8, #3840, Louisiana State Archives, Baton Rouge, La.
7. Sale by Thomas Mulledy to Henry Johnson, 10 November 1838, Conveyance Book T, pp. 35-37, #25, Iberville Parish Clerk of Court, Plaquemine, La.
8. Sale by Thomas Mulledy to Jesse Batey, 10 November 1838, Conveyance Book T, pp. 34-35, #24, Iberville Parish Clerk of Court, Plaquemine, La.
9. Fr. Grivel to Fr. Lancaster, 6 November 1838, "Old Isaac is quite cheerful," MPA, Box 66, Folder 3, Booth Family Center for Special Collections, Georgetown University, online at the [Georgetown Slavery Archive](#).