

In Search of the Source of My Nigerian Ethnicity

By Burks Oakley II
[originally written 9 January 2024]

According to Ancestry.com, my ethnicity estimates include 1% Nigeria:



I wrote about this part of my ethnicity previously:

<http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/92-Burks-NigerianEthnicity.pdf>

In that narrative, I documented how my Nigerian ethnicity must come from my **Burks** ancestors. I speculated that one of my **Burks** male ancestors married a Melungeon (or possibly a Black or multi-racial) woman.

In searching for information about my **Burks** ancestors online, I ran across some postings from Roger O. Burks Jr. Roger and I are both descended from William Burks and his wife Eliza Cade. This couple were my third-great grandparents.

I recently exchanged emails with Roger, and I learned that he also has 1% Nigerian ethnicity. And that his late father had 2% Nigerian ethnicity. These findings certainly support the notion that my Nigerian ethnicity comes from my **Burks** ancestral line.

William Burks’ paternal grandfather was Samuel Burks II (or Jr.) and Samuel’s wife was Elizabeth Mims. If you are paying attention, you will know that Samuel Burks and Elizabeth Mims were my fifth-great grandparents.

Roger speculates that Elizabeth Mims was Black (or at least bi-racial), with ancestors from Nigeria. His speculation is based on several findings. One is that the oral history in his branch of the **Burks** family, as well as correspondence with other **Burks** family members, points to Elizabeth being Black. Roger also knows that the **Mims** family owned slaves – so he thinks it is possible that Elizabeth

Mims’ father was a **Mims** male, while her mother was a slave (I hope I have this correct). Lastly, Roger has a DNA match with a Black man whose grandfather was a **Mims**.

After thinking about this for a while, I wondered if I also have a DNA match with a Black individual having the surname of **Mims**. And if I did have a match, could I show that it involved my **Burks** ancestors?

I searched on Ancestry.com for my DNA matches who have **Mims** as part of their username¹:

Burks Oakley's DNA Matches

All matchesBy parentBy ancestorBy location

Filter by:

UnviewedCommon ancestors

Match name

Surname in matches' trees

Birth location in matches' trees

MimsSurname in matches' treesBirth location in matches' trees

Search

Distant Family



James Mims

5th – 8th Cousin
14 cM | < 1% shared DNA
Paternal side

 Public linked tree
10 People



Jimmy Mims

5th – 8th Cousin
11 cM | < 1% shared DNA
Paternal side

 Public linked tree
56 People



ErinMims1

5th – 8th Cousin
11 cM | < 1% shared DNA
Paternal side

 Public linked tree
31 People



Jimmie Mims

5th – 8th Cousin
11 cM | < 1% shared DNA
Paternal side

 Unlinked Tree

There were four matches. The first three did not have any Nigerian or Sub-Saharan African ethnicities. That brought me to Jimmie Mims.

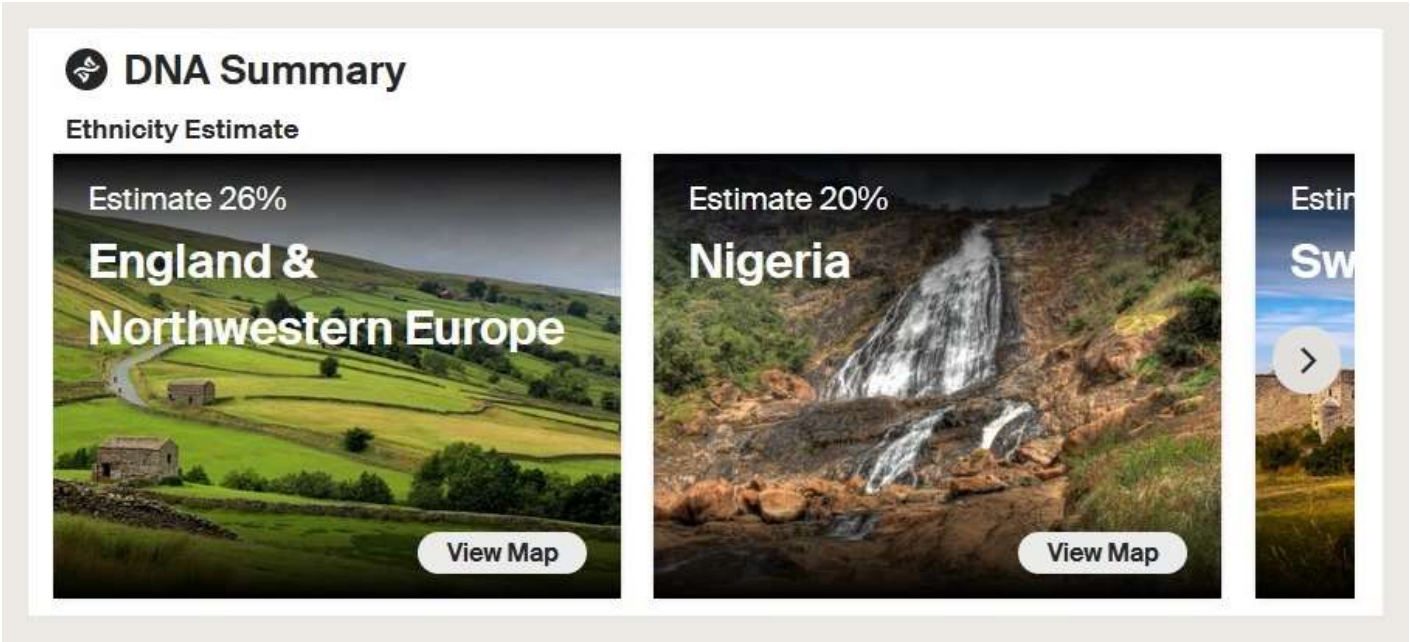
What do you think I found?

Scroll down....

Scroll to the next page....

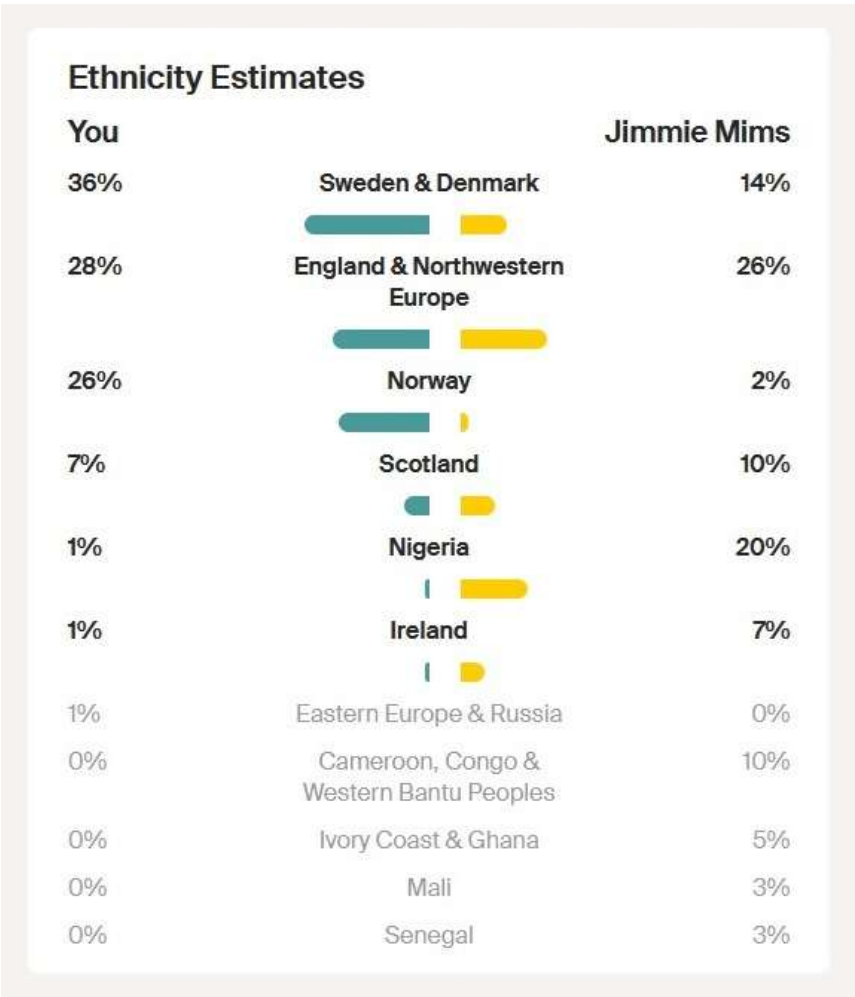
¹ I now realize that this search would NOT identify individuals who have usernames such as R.S. and DominoQueen.

Jimmie’s ethnicities include 20% Nigeria!!!!



Wow!

Here is his complete ethnicity estimate:

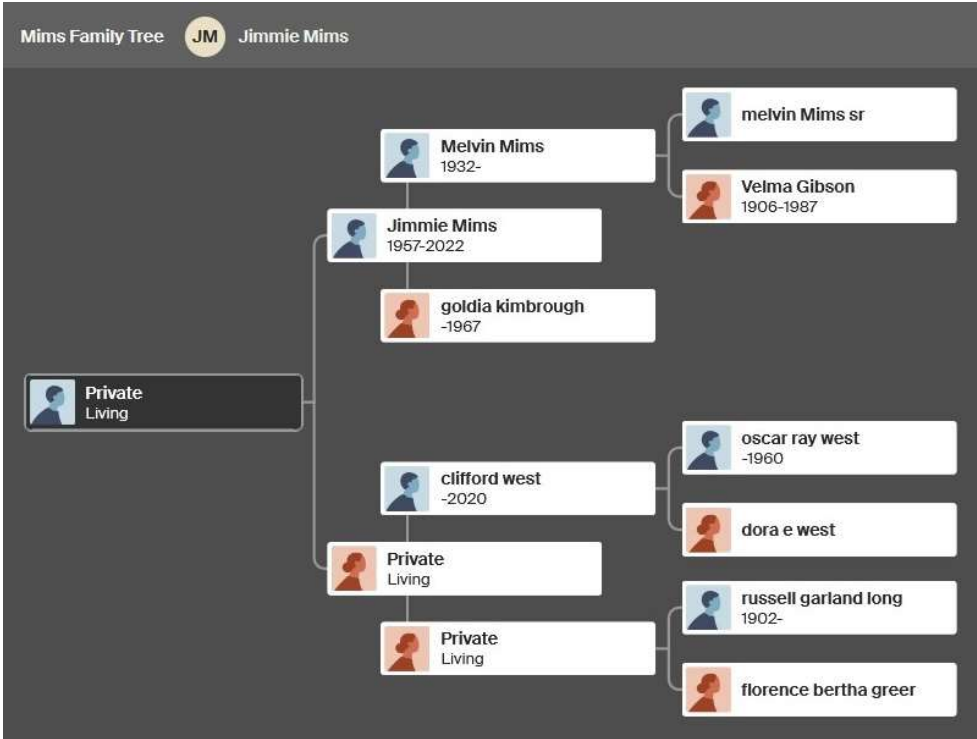


Jimmie has other Sub-Saharan African ethnicities:

Cameroon, Congo, and Western Bantu Peoples	10%
Mali	3%
Senegal	3%

He also has a large amount of European ethnicities, which to me indicates that he is multi-racial.

Jimmie has a rather limited family tree on Ancestry.com:



So his family tree wasn't much help to me. Remember, I really would like to connect Jimmie Mims to my *Burks* ancestors.

I looked at my other *Oakley* cousins who have their DNA on Ancestry.com. Mark Eidem and Sullivan Oakley do not have DNA matches with Jimmie Mims. But Tim Oakley does:

Tim Oakley's DNA Matches

[All matches](#)[By parent](#)[By ancestor](#)[By location](#)

Filter by:

Unviewed

Common ancestors

Search

Sort

Match name

Surname in matches' trees

Birth location in matches' trees

Jimmie Mims

Surname in matches' trees

Birth location in matches' trees

Search

Distant Family



Jimmie Mims

5th – 8th Cousin
10 cM | < 1% shared DNA
Paternal side

Unlinked Tree

And so does Hal Oakley:

Hal Oakley's DNA Matches

[All matches](#)[By parent](#)[By ancestor](#)[By location](#)

Filter by:

Unviewed

Common ancestors

Search

Sort

Match name

Surname in matches' trees

Birth location in matches' trees

Jimmie Mims

Surname in matches' trees

Birth location in matches' trees

Search

Distant Family



Jimmie Mims

5th – 8th Cousin
11 cM | < 1% shared DNA
Paternal side

Unlinked Tree

While it is nice to see that both Tim and Hal have DNA matches with Jimmie Mims, this doesn't provide any new information.

I went on to look at the DNA matches that Jimmie and I have in common. Recall that in order to be on the list of shared DNA matches, a person must have DNA matches with both Jimmie and me that are at least 20 cM in size. This size requirement limits the number of individuals on the "Shared Matches" list.

In fact, Jimmie and I have only a single person on our list of Shared Matches:



You and Jimmie Mims

5th – 8th Cousin | Paternal side
< 1% shared DNA: 11 cM across 1 segments

Trees

Ethnicity

Shared Matches

Filter by:

Unviewed

Common ancestors

Search | Sort

Distant Family



flyingl1

4th – 6th Cousin
25 cM | < 1% shared DNA
Paternal side

No Trees

This person (male) has a username of *flyingl1*. Unfortunately, he doesn't have a family tree on the Ancestry.com website.

But is he related to me through the *Burks* line? Or really through the *Mims* line?

I looked at my DNA match with *flyingl1* and learned that we share 25 cM of DNA:



You and flyingl1

4th – 6th Cousin | Paternal side
< 1% shared DNA: 25 cM across 1 segments

At this point, I wondered if I could connect *flyingl1* to my *Burks* relatives.

What do you think I found?

Go on to the next page....

I looked at the DNA matches that *flyingl1* and I share:



FL

You and flyingl1
4th – 6th Cousin | Paternal side
< 1% shared DNA: 25 cM across 1 segments

Trees Ethnicity **Shared Matches**

Filter by:

Unviewed

Common ancestors

Search | Sort

Close Family



Tim Oakley
1st – 2nd Cousin
511 cM | 7% shared DNA
Paternal side

Unlinked Tree

Extended Family



mikecascone@gmailcom
2nd – 3rd Cousin
106 cM | 2% shared DNA
Paternal side

Public linked tree
11 People

Common ancestor

Wow! The only people on the list of Shared DNA Matches were my cousin Tim Oakley and Mike Cascone. And Mike is my second-cousin once-removed. We both are descended from James Alfred Burks, who was my great-grandfather.

Relationship to mikecascone@gmailcom
You may be related to mikecascone@gmailcom through James Alfred Burks



James Alfred Burks
Great-grandfather
1831-1900



Kate Cameron Burks
Paternal grandmother
1873-1954



Burks Oakley
Father
1898-1969



Burks Oakley



Paul Dore Burks
Granduncle
1870-1948



Velma Margaret Burks
1st cousin 1x removed
1902-1975



Private
2nd cousin

EVALUATE



MI

mikecascone@gmailcom
2nd cousin 1x removed
106 cM | 7 segments

Mike is descended from James Alfred Burks through his son Paul Dore Burks, while I am descended from James Alfred Burks through his daughter Kate Cameron Burks.

So what do I know at this point? I have a DNA match with a Black man named Jimmie Mims, and my fifth-great grandmother was Elizabeth Mims, who might have been Black. Jimmie and I both have DNA matches that are at least 20 cM in

size with a man having the username of ***flyingl1*** on Ancestry.com, and ***flyingl1*** is related to me through my ***Burks*** ancestral line.

All this is interesting, but it really doesn't give me anything solid to go on.

I searched on Ancestry.com for other profiles for a woman named Elizabeth Mims who was married to a man named Samuel Burks. I found a profile for her in the family tree owned by Willett Wiggins, who by his photo is Black:

<https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/167271278/person/262176165365/facts>



But it didn't seem that Elizabeth Mims connected with others in this family tree. And when I searched for Willett Wiggins, I learned that he passed away recently: "Willett Lee Wiggins, age 88, of Kansas City, Missouri passed away on Thursday, December 7, 2023." So I won't be able to ask him why Elizabeth Mims was in his family tree. What was his interest in Elizabeth Mims?

Well, this is about all I know right now. I wanted to document this so that someone in the future will be able to use this as a starting point – assuming that the DNA tools will be so much better in another decade or two...