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Phillips DNA News

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Please submit news articles or ideas for articles to the editor. Questions about Genetic Genealogy can always be sent to the editor.

Project News

Happy Easter, everyone!

As you may have noticed, our co-administrator Tom Hutchison set up a fan page for us on Facebook in March. Virginia "Jen" Phillips-Smith, our other co-administrator, will be combing Facebook for Phillips from around the world. Here is a link to it:

<http://facebook.phillipsdnaproject.com>

If you belong to Facebook, we hope you will become a fan. We already have 26 fans and it is fun to see everyone's pictures on our list of fans. Tom also added Twitter, Share and RSS buttons to our website. The hope is our Phillips DNA project will soon go viral and help us add participants! The more participants we have, the more likely everyone is to find a DNA match. If you want a laugh, read "Story of a Technologically Challenged Senior" at the end of this newsletter that discusses the new phenomenon of Twitter, etc!

A man named Bill Davenport prepares a quarterly report on all the DNA projects at Family Tree DNA. On 31 December 2009, he visited the FTDNA projects page and copied all the names of surname projects along with the number of participants into a spreadsheet, which he then sorted in order from the largest to the smallest. The number of projects with 50 or more participants was 665 at the end of December, and Bill posted the list at this link:

<http://www.worldfamilies.net/content/surname-projects-50-members>

Participants in projects of 50 or more participants represented about 63% of the total, while 42% of the total was in 100+ projects and 20% was in 200+ projects. I am happy to report that the Phillips DNA project has over 425 participants and we rank 13th on Bill's list! Here is a list of the 20 largest surname projects and their total number of participants as of December 31, 2009:

1. Donald/MacDonald USA, 888 participants
2. Clan Fraser, 815 participants
3. Adopted, 809 participants
4. Williams, 724 participants
5. Johnson, 701 participants
6. Brown/Browne/Braun, 661 participants

7. Southern California, 640 participants
8. Walker, 606 participants
9. Donnachaidh, 605 participants
10. Rose, 549 participants
11. Wells, 487 participants
12. MacLaren, 473 participants
13. Phillips, 426 participants
14. Baker, 424 participants
15. Davis/Davies/David, 410 participants
16. Graves, 405 participants
17. Harris, 395 participants
18. Smith-Southern USA, 394 participants
19. Wilson, 392 participants
20. Moore-Worldwide, 381 participants

Guest Column

A Decade of DNA Testing

By Debbie Kennett, Blogger, Editor, Genealogist, DNA Project Administrator

It is now the ten years since DNA tests first became available on a commercial basis for family history purposes. Since that time, prices have dropped considerably and a huge range of tests are available from a number of different companies. DNA testing is no longer the preserve of a few early adopters but is, for many people, an integral part of their family history research. A DNA test is not a replacement for the traditional documentary research but is used in conjunction with the paper records. A DNA test will determine whether or not two people share a common ancestor within a certain number of generations. DNA can, therefore, be used to validate your research but it will also go back beyond the paper trail by connecting two people who have no proof of a documentary link. DNA tests can also be used to explore illegitimate lines or to help male adoptees find their probable biological surname.

There are two DNA tests which have a direct genealogical application: the Y chromosome DNA (Y-DNA) test for men and the mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) test which can be taken by men or women. David Pike explained how these tests work in his article "A Gentle Introduction to Genetic Genealogy" in the November 2006 issue (Vol. 31 No. 4, p116) of the Somerset and Dorset Family History Society magazine which can be read at this link:

<http://www.cs.mun.ca/~dapike/GIGG/gigg.pdf>

This article provides guidance on finding a suitable DNA project and advice on choosing a testing company.

As Y-Dna generally follows the path of surnames, a Y-DNA test is of most value when the results are compared with other people of the same or a similar surname. I have been running a Y-DNA

surname project for my CRUWYS/CRUSE one-name study for almost two years and my project now has almost 50 members. I have seen at first hand how useful DNA testing can be as a tool. It is very satisfying when you have confirmation that your lovingly researched tree is correct. Unexpected DNA matches have also opened up new avenues of research. I have, for instance, discovered that one Somerset/Devon Cruse/Cruwys line has common ancestry with lines from Cornwall and London. The challenge now is to find the link in the paper trail. On the other hand, two Somerset Cruse lines which I thought would match a Devon line did not match at all!

There are now over 5,000 surname projects, and most high-frequency surnames are well represented. There are for instance large projects with over 500 members for surnames such as WILLIAMS, BROWN, JOHNSON and WALKER. There are so many SMITHS that they have been subdivided into three separate projects. Somerset and/or Dorset names featured in projects include CHURCHILL, POMEROY and POINTING. If there is an existing surname project for your name it therefore makes sense to take the test with the company where the project is hosted. As women do not inherit Y-DNA from their fathers, they cannot take a Y-DNA test themselves, but they can become involved by persuading the appropriate candidate such as their father, brother, uncle or male cousin to take a Y-DNA test on their behalf. Some surname projects have the facility to subsidise the cost of a test through donations from other researchers or through a Family Association. For example, free tests are available from the relevant surname projects for men in the UK with the surnames BOYT/BOYETTE, HOOK(E)/HOOKS, PIKE and PHIL(L)IPS. The HAM(M) project will provide 50% of the cost of a test. Other projects will no doubt have similar offers.

If no surname project exists, another option is to test through a geographical project. I set up a Devon DNA Project (www.familytreedna.com/public/Devon) in March 2009 which has already attracted over 80 participants. There are also projects for Hampshire, East Anglia and Northumberland and an all-embracing British Isles DNA Project. There are currently no projects for Somerset or Dorset, but if anyone is interested in setting up a project, I would be happy to provide assistance. Geographical projects are also a useful repository for mtDNA results.

The International Society of Genetic Genealogy (ISOGG), an independent volunteer-run organisation, provides some useful information on their website (www.isogg.org) to help with the choice of testing company, including comparison charts for the Y-DNA and mtDNA tests provided by the various companies. They also host active mailing lists for DNA newbies and DNA project administrators. Important points to consider when choosing a testing company include the size of the company's database, the range of tests available, and the ability to store your sample so that you or your descendants are able to take advantage of future developments.

Genetic genealogy is a new and fast-moving science and is an increasingly valuable tool for genealogists. As the databases and the various projects grow in size, family historians will be able to make breakthroughs with their research by joining together previously unconnected lineages. It will be possible to determine precisely how many different genetic lineages exist for each surname, and to learn more about surname origins and evolution.

Further reading

I have written two lengthier articles which provide further information:

- "Is the answer in your genes?" available online at:
www.irishtype3dna.org/DebbieKennett.php.
- "A practical guide to DNA testing". *Family History Monthly*, October 2009, issue 174 pp22-25 available from the publishers: www.familyhistorymonthly.com/.

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Websites

www.dna-testing-adviser.com Richard Hill's independent guide to DNA testing
www.kerchner.com/dna-info.htm Charles Kerchner's genetic genealogy resources page
www.peopleofthebritishisles.org The People of the British Isles research project
www.bradshawfoundation.com/journey An interactive map showing the migration of man out of Africa and around the world.
<https://genographic.nationalgeographic.com/genographic/atlas.html> Atlas of the human journey
www.rootstelevision.com/players/player_dna3.php The DNA channel from Roots Television
www.thegeneticgenealogist.com Blaine Bettinger's blog for the latest news from the world of genetic genealogy
www.worldfamilies.net Educational resources for project administrators and project listings by haplogroup, surname, size and geographical area
www.one-name.org The Guild of One-Name Studies

Testing companies

<http://dna.ancestry.com> DNA Ancestry
www.dnaheritage.com DNA Heritage
www.familytreedna.com Family Tree DNA
<http://genographic.nationalgeographic.com> The Genographic Project

DNA databases

www.ysearch.org A public Y-DNA database sponsored by Family Tree DNA
<http://ybase.org> A public Y-DNA database sponsored by DNA Heritage
www.mitosearch.org A public mtDNA database sponsored by Family Tree DNA
www.smgf.org The Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation

Books

Family History in the Genes: Trace Your DNA and Grow Your Family Tree by Chris Pomery (National Archives, 2007).

Trace Your Roots with DNA: Using Genetic Tests to Explore Your Family Tree by Megan Smolensky and Ann Turner (Rodale Books, USA, 2005).

Featured Family Story

The DNA of Early Phillips Families in Amherst County, Virginia

By Nancy Kiser with input from Virginia Phillips-Smith, Phillips Family Group 8

There were twelve men with the last name of Phillips living in Amherst County, Virginia, by the time of the first existing Amherst County tithable list in 1782, which was taken during the Revolution. The word “tithable” refers to a poll or head tax that became due and payable in Virginia when a white male reached the age of 16. Usually boys from the age of 16 to 21 were listed with their fathers, unless they had gotten married and become heads of household. The names and statistics for the twelve Phillips men are as follows:

Leonard Phillips, Sen. One white tithable, one negro tithable, one horse, no cattle.
William Phillips. One white tithable, no negro tithables, one horse, one cow.
Matthew Phillips. One white tithable, three negro tithables, three horses, two cows.
Leonard Phillips, Jun. One white tithable, three negro tithables, four horses, six cows.
David Phillips. One white tithable, no negro tithables, two horses, six cows.
Zachariah Phillips. One white tithable, seven negro tithables, six horses, twelve cows.
John Phillips. One white tithable, no negro tithables, one horse, six cows.
Thomas Phillips/Exempt. One white tithable, no negro tithables, one horse, six cows.
Jacob Phillips. One white tithable, no negro tithables, two horses, five cows.
William Phillips. One white tithable, three negro tithables, two horses, thirteen cows.
George Phillips. One white tithable, two negro tithables, two horses, six cows.
John Phillips. One white tithable, three negro tithables, three horses, ten cows.

From marriage, deed, court, tax, probate, bible and other paper records, it appears that some of these men were related, but yDNA testing has revealed that they were not all related; or, at least, their Phillips lines were not related. Here is a brief summary of what we have deduced about each of these men from the written records and yDNA tests.

Leonard Phillips, Sr., William Phillips, Matthew Phillips, Leonard Phillips, Jr., David and Zachariah Phillips all lived near one another in the Rockfish River Valley of northern Amherst County, an area that would become Nelson County in 1807. Y-DNA testing has proven that all of these men were related and their Phillips lineages are shown in Phillips Family DNA Group 8 in the Phillips DNA Project.

Leonard Sr. married Johannah Davis probably in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, in the early 1730s. He was mentioned in the will of John Davis, the father of Johannah, dated 14 March 1733. Leonard Sr. died without a will about 1797 in Amherst County and DNA indicates it is likely that Leonard Sr. was the father of William, Matthew, Leonard Jr., David and Zachariah who all appear on the 1782 tithable list with him. William and Leonard Jr. permanently disappeared from the Amherst County tax records in 1784, indicating that they either moved or died. A Lenyard Phillips appears in the records of Wilkes County, Georgia, in 1789 and a Leonard Phillips appears in the records of Wilkes County, North Carolina, in 1793.

Matthew Phillips was married to a woman who was sometimes referred to as Ann and sometimes as Nancy in the tax and deed records of Amherst County. Her last name is unknown, but it might have been Goolsby. Matthew died in 1791, leaving a nuncupative (verbal) will appointing his wife Anne and David Phillips as the executors of his estate. Matthew had five children at the time of his death, all of whom were still minors. From later deed records, it can be established that they were named John, Nelson, Charles, Susan, and Polly. Two descendants of Matthew Phillips have been DNA tested and they appear as kit numbers 46393 and 107831 in Phillips Family DNA Group 8.

David Phillips obtained a marriage bond to marry Mary Davis in Orange County, Virginia, 2 March 1778. We believe that Mary Davis was the niece of Johanna Davis Phillips. David and Mary appear to have moved away from Amherst County in 1798, because David disappears from the tax list in that year and never returns. David died in Wilkes County, Georgia in 1819 or 1820, naming the following children in his will: James, Elizabeth Baber, William, Mildred Shackelford, Polly Wooton, Matthew, Jonathan, Frances Johnson, Nancy Henderson, Reuben and Nathan. A descendant of David Phillips has been DNA tested and he appears as kit number 84527 in Phillips Family DNA Group 8.

Zachariah Phillips was married to Frances White, the daughter of John and Ann White of Orange County, Virginia. Since the first child of Zachariah and Frances appears from tax records to have been born about 1765, Zachariah and Frances were probably married shortly before that date. Zachariah died in Amherst County in 1807, naming the following children in his will: John, Zachariah, Leonard, Thomas, Joseph, Conyers, Joshua, Ann Griffin, Johannah Rucker, and Frances W. Bailey. Several descendants of Zachariah Phillips have been DNA tested and they appear in Group 8 as kit numbers 50328, 73873, 80744 and 120482.

There are two John Phillips on the 1782 Amherst County tithable list. The first one seems to be the son of Joseph and Mary Phillips who patented land in Orange County, Virginia in 1739. He was married to a woman who is sometimes called Avey and sometimes called Avla in the Amherst County records. According to an old family bible, which is still in existence, John married Avery in 1762. I suspect that Avey/Avla/Avery are all nicknames for Avarilla. Although no direct descendant of John has been DNA tested, several descendants of his probable brothers William, Joseph and Bennett have been tested and their DNA indicates they belong to Phillips Family DNA Group 29.

The Thomas Phillips on the 1782 tithable list is something of a mystery. He only appears sporadically on the tax lists in future years, apparently because he was exempt from paying his poll or head tax. Ministers, sheriffs and other officials were exempted from paying a head tax, as were overseers if their poll was paid by their employer. This Thomas was married to a woman named Sarah, and he may have been the son of a Thomas Phillips who died in Amherst County in 1778, naming wife Mary and sons John, Stephen, Thomas and William in his will. As far as I know, no male descendant of Thomas Phillips has been DNA tested.

The last group of Phillips on the 1782 tithable list includes Jacob, William, George and John. These Phillips appear to have lived along the Buffalo River in the southern part of Amherst County - the part that remained in Amherst County when Nelson County was carved out of Amherst County in 1807.

Jacob Phillips was probably married to Sarah Mayfield, the daughter of Isaac Mayfield. Although I have not located a will for Jacob Phillips, I believe his children were named Isaac, Frankie, Sallie, Jinny, John, Sukie, Jacob, Millie, Peggy and George. Several of Jacob's children migrated to Kentucky. I have not been able to identify the father of Jacob Phillips, but I suspect that his father was named John Phillips. One descendant of Jacob Phillips has been DNA tested and he turned out to belong to Phillips Family DNA Group 22. He is kit number 118918.

The second John Phillips on the 1782 tithable list was John Phillips who supposedly married Sarah Foster in Amherst County in about 1749. This is not possible, of course, because Amherst County did not exist in 1749. George and William Phillips whose names appear on the list next to John are probably his sons. John and Sarah's children supposedly included William, George, John, Gabriel, James, Frances, Nancy/Ann, Elizabeth, Lucy, Sarah and Mary. According to family legend, which is backed up by evidence in the county records, John and Sarah moved to Kentucky about 1794 with all of their children except William, Frances and Sarah.

William Phillips, the son of John and Sarah Phillips, was married to Mary Watts, and he was supposedly the only son of John and Sarah who remained in Amherst County and did not migrate to Kentucky. Based on deed and other records, the children of William and Mary Phillips included John, Benjamin, Moses, Frances, Polly, Elizabeth, Barthena, Sally, Nancy, Dabney and George. A descendant of Moses Phillips has been DNA tested and he does not match any other men named Phillips in the Phillips DNA project. He appears as kit number 162970 under Haplogroup I Singletons.

To summarize, yDNA testing has now proven there were at least four unrelated Phillips families living in Amherst County, Virginia, in 1782. This phenomena has been one of the most surprising things that DNA analysis has revealed to date, in my opinion. Over and over again, we have discovered unrelated Phillips families living in the same areas in the 1700s. Before the advent of DNA analysis, I had suspected all Phillips families were not related, but I had not expected to find quite this much diversity!

Story of a Technologically Challenged Senior

From Anonymous Chain Email

I ran a business with 1,800 employees, all without a Blackberry that played music, took videos, pictures and communicated with Facebook and Twitter. But....

I signed up under duress for Twitter and Facebook, so my seven kids, their spouses, 13 grandkids and 2 great grand kids could communicate with me in the modern way. I figured I could handle something as simple as Twitter with only 140 characters of space.

That was before one of my grandkids hooked me up for Tweeter, Tweetree, Twhirl, Twitterfon, Tweetie and Twittererific Tweetdeck, Twitpix and something that sends every message to my cell phone and every other program within the texting world.

My phone was beeping every three minutes with the details of everything except the bowel movements of the entire next generation. I am not ready to live like this. I keep my cell phone in the garage in my golf bag.

The kids bought me a GPS for my last birthday because they say I get lost every now and then going over to the grocery store or library. I keep that in a box under my tool bench with the Blue tooth [it's red] phone I am supposed to use when I drive. I wore it once and was standing in line at Barnes and Noble talking to my wife as everyone in the nearest 50 yards was glaring at me. Seems I have to take my hearing aid out to use it and I got a little loud.

I mean, the GPS looked pretty smart on my dash board, but the lady inside was the most annoying, rudest person I had run into in a long time. Every 10 minutes, she would sarcastically say, "Re-cal-cu-la-ting." You would think that she could be nicer. It was like she could barely tolerate me. She would let go with a deep sigh and then tell me to make a U-turn at the next light. Then when I would make a right turn instead, it was not good.

When I get really lost now, I call my wife and tell her the name of the cross streets and while she is starting to develop the same tone as Gypsy, the GPS lady, at least she loves me.

To be perfectly frank, I am still trying to learn how to use the cordless phones in our house. We have had them for four years, but I still haven't figured out how I can lose three phones all at once and have to run around digging under chair cushions and checking bathrooms and the dirty laundry baskets when the phone rings.

The world is just getting too complex for me. They even mess me up every time I go to the grocery store. You would think they could settle on something themselves, but this sudden "Paper or Plastic?" every time I check out just knocks me for a loop.

I bought some of those cloth reusable bags to avoid looking confused but I never remember to take them in with me. Now I toss it back to them. When they ask me, "Paper or Plastic?" I just say, "Doesn't matter to me. I am bi-sacksual." Then it's their turn to stare at me with a blank look.