



©2009 The Phillips DNA Project

Phillips DNA News

www.phillipsdnaproject.com

August 2009

Volume 1 Issue 7

Editor: [Nancy Kiser](#)

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

Project News

It's the Dog Days of August, as we used to say during my childhood years back in Missouri, which was also known as the State of Misery in August. I have to admit that even southern Colorado is pretty miserable in August. However, these days we can stay indoors in the cool comfort of air conditioning and entertain ourselves on our computers!

In July, we arranged to have flyers distributed at several genealogical fairs in the UK, including the South West Area Genealogy fair and the Gathering of the Clans in Scotland. We received the following report on the SWAG fair from a nice British lady named Pat Wilson who is also a member of GOONS (the Guild of One-Name Studies):

We did distribute some of the PHILLIPS DNA flyers at the fair...including one to a nice young man who said he was the last PHILLIPS in Weston-super-Mare and who promised me he would make contact. Also to a lady who was most interested as she had PHILLIPS relatives but there were adoptions involved so she was trying to prove something. Then Geoff Riggs (the Goons regional rep for the whole of Wales) took quite a few and will distribute them to all the Family History Societies in Wales and get a mention put in all the journals. I have a few left here and will also send them to editors that I know locally. Also I am sending some to a small village in Pembrokeshire called Solva that has a lot of PHILLIPS residents. My friend who lives there will put them in the village hall. I hope your project is going well...best wishes...Pat.

With regard to the Gathering of the Clans in Edinburgh, Scotland, here is a report from John Carr, another genetic genealogist:

I've been in touch with Max Bennett at FTDNA about their experience at The Gathering. He tells me that they were busier at this event than they have ever been. The crowd was continuous and constant, not giving them any break throughout both days. They collected a lot of DNA samples and handed out a lot of brochures. Max's off the cuff evaluation is that "We swabbed many Scots, Australians, Canadians, and New Zealanders. I think Scots were about 40%." Now we will see how that translates into new kits for the projects and results to compare. Hopefully those of us looking for Scottish genealogical connections will have some positive results.

The event also provided a bit more exposure to DNA for Genealogy testing. To quote Max, "There was a nice story about DNA testing in the Sunday Times, last Sunday. The reporter came to our booth and interviewed a couple of people. But he did not mention our name in the article. There will be a follow up once one of the guys results are in, and hopefully then we will be mentioned. There was also a TV crew that spent quite a good time at our booth, but it's for a production about the Gathering that will be distributed to TV stations."

Unfortunately, they did not have any time to circulate among the Clan tents to promote DNA testing there directly. Max was told by several people at the event that DNA testing was the talk of the event. Hopefully that is at least partially true.

Questions and Answers

Question: When I go to my personal page at FTDNA and click on Matches in the left column, a page comes up where it talks about gedcoms, etc, and under that, a list of names downloads with their e-mail addresses according to number of matches. And there is an orange and blue figure to the right of their names. Should my name appear on that list and what does the orange and blue figure mean?

Answer: Only the names of other people that your DNA matches show up under Matches on your personal page. Your name and email address will not appear there. If you click on the orange and blue icon to the right of the names of your matches, you will get something called a TiP Report that tells you how closely related you are to that person based on the number of markers that match between the two of you.

Question: I mismatch another person on one marker out of 25, and the TiP report provided by FTDNA says I have a 95% chance of sharing a common paternal ancestor with him within 20 generations. However, I am not very excited about a 95% chance. Maybe to people involved in DNA that is good, but what does it take to get a 95% chance in 5 or 6 generations and 99% in 10?

Answer: I wish I was more of a mathematician so I could explain probability analysis better. I have come to realize in dealing with comparisons of over 400 men in our Phillips DNA project that any probability over 75% of sharing a common paternal ancestor is pretty definitive. Here is a good example. We have a father and son in the Phillips project, and they match perfectly on 67 out of 67 markers. However, the TiP Report provided by FTDNA says they only have an 89.79% chance of sharing a common paternal ancestor within 4 generations. As the calculations go back in time, the probability goes up until a 100% probability is finally reached at 20 generations. And this is for two men who are father and son and who match perfectly on 67 out of 67 markers! In other words, the probability calculations provided by FTDNA are very, very conservative.

Question: Which leads me to another question. I notice that people in the some family groups often have several markers that don't match.....I assume documentation places them there even if it is not a perfect match. But without any documentation how could one know if they fit even with a perfect match? Is there any magic number of matches to look for?

Answer: Yes, there are a certain “magic” number of matches. FTDNA publishes the following rules on their website: in order to be considered related within a genealogically relevant time frame, two men who share the same last name or some variation of it must not mismatch by more than 1 marker out of the first 12 markers, or 2 markers out of the first 25 markers, or 4 markers out of the first 37 markers, or 7 markers out of the first 67 markers.

But these rules are not hard and fast. When there is a mismatching marker, it is also important to consider the magnitude of the mismatch. If the mismatch is a two step mismatch (for example, one person has a value of 12 and the other person has a value of 14 for the same marker), this usually counts as 2 mismatches.

However, some markers mutate more frequently than others, and some markers may be susceptible to mutating by more than one step in a single generation. In other words, occasionally a particular marker may mutate by two or more steps when it is passed from the father to the son. If this happens, it is only counted as one mismatch. There are also instances of markers that seem to mutate in step or in unison, so when they mutate it only counts as one mismatch.

Featured Phillips Family Story

Response to a British Article on DNA *By C. John Phillips, Family Group 8*

If you live in fear of contributing your DNA in search of your ancestors, please don't worry. Let me tell you of my experience. A recent article in the Birmingham and Midland Society for Genealogy and Heraldry (BMSGH) magazine requested those with the PHILLIPS surname who could trace back five generations to contact a lady in the USA for a free DNA test. After much anguish, I did. Curiosity overcame my fear of the test and MI5 or one of the other agencies having access.

It was easy. A packet arrived in the post containing what looked like 3 mini toothbrushes. The instructions on taking a swab were clear and I succeeded uninjured except for the Post Office queue to have the contents weighed and posted. The kit had a unique reference number so that I could not be confused with some other family and I was informed on progress through the internet. Nancy, the project coordinator, proved to be the world's best at providing critical information at the right time. It was like waiting outside the birthing ward at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, not knowing what to expect.

The results came quickly and placed me in the I2b2 category. Was this good or was it bad? This identified me and any others like me with some 3000-year-old skeletons from a cave in Germany, a few Phillips families in USA who can trace their lines back to the 17th century and another family by the name of Crane. This led to further tests (37 markers analysis) which clarified me as probably being associated with each of these relatives in the last 350 years. So what does this tell me?

Firstly, surnames may not necessarily be the key motivator of the information we all seek. A Mr. Crane or a Mr. Phillips could have rolled in the hay with a neighbour's wife and, oops, we have a name change and are following the wrong tree. Alternatively, a Brummy (editor's note: Birmingham native) who backed the wrong side in the civil war could have found it convenient to adopt a neighbour's name. Both Cranes and Phillips appear in the Church records of Birmingham St. Martins and nearby churches. I know my family is from this area. We need family trees of both for the early 1700s, 1600s and 1500s. Rather than seeking out others, I did consider opening a few old graves for their valuable DNA, but there is probably a law against it anyway. The tests suggest the CRANES and PHILLIPS were related within the last 350 years and living people could have traced back to the connection.

Secondly, I now know of some relatives who immigrated to the USA around the time of the civil war in the mid 1600's. They may have paid for their passage or been helped by a government contribution. They believe their ancestors originated in London but my association with the Midlands suggests this may not be right. Could they be your relatives who took ship from Bristol, then the 2nd largest city? Someone could have their names in their family tree.

The third fact is that we are all associated with a group who found their way into a cave in Germany 3000 years ago. Are we therefore descended from the group of Saxons invited in the early 400's to defend these shores after the Romans left or are we the raping and pillaging types who followed a little later and helped set up the Kingdom of Mercia? Could we even have come with William in 1066, having spent a few generations in Normandy? Maybe it's a mystery that can be solved with some DNA from early Saxon graves. Has anyone ideas where this is available?

One area that can be solved is by finding someone with the same DNA who can trace his ancestor Phillips back to the West Midlands in the early 1700s, 1600s and 1500s. Now, I do believe this person exists and think we can help him by sharing the information on a cave in Germany. I know you are either reading this note or someone reading it knows who you are.

Please let me know if you might be a male walking around with my DNA. If each of the Midlands Phillips could identify their DNA, we could each eliminate our non-family members and welcome other long lost souls into our clan. I can be contacted on [John{the "@" sign}cjphillips.me.uk](mailto:John@cjphillips.me.uk). Help fit the jigsaw together and join the big Phillips detective challenge and get to know who your ancestors really are. My mother is 95 and would like to know where her husband really came from. Surely more daughters and wives would like to know more information on the PHILLIPS line they have joined.

Guest Column

By Any Other Name *By Everette Doyle Phillips, Family Group 9*

You might reasonably say that genealogy includes fascination with various kinds of historical study--languages and linguistic nuances included. I think it's safe to say that most of our family names are from the Hebrew.

O, why did Hebrew (and related Semitic languages) not use vowels? It might have made our family research easier.

A salient example of a vowel-free Hebrew name is the once super-secret appellation Y'H'W'H or something similar, sometimes J'H'W'H. Thus the name would become either "Jehovah" or "Yahweh". Some speculation is that it evolved to Joshua and when the Greeks got hold of it, Joshua became Jesus.

The Hebrew male given name John (Yochanan) means God is gracious (to give us this boy). A very similar name is Jonathan (and thus Nathan) meaning God has given or gift of God. (Incidentally Nathan also means God has given.) J'N has come down to the present as Jan, Jen (Jenkins too), Jin, Jon and I suppose that somewhere there is a Jun. Now, many a family such as ours is overstuffed with the biblical name John and its associates.

Just a few of the Hebrew female given names close to the John variations are:

Johannah: God is gracious,
Hannah: Grace, favour,
and
Anna: Grace, favour.

Fast forward to the era of vital records--ecclesiastical mostly--of interest to genealogists. For a time, religious ministers in many European countries and America were classically trained in Hebrew, Greek and Latin languages.

When notations of family events were to be made, the minister would most often be the only one who could inscribe the marriages, births, christenings and deaths. Too frequently names would be changed from their common spelling to something more worthy of the recorder's intellectual studies. Did the scribe always give the correct rendering of John in the Latin or other language that he thought appropriate? Was his handwriting always good? Neither, reliably.

For example, if the name John was used by an Englishman, a German minister might have thought that Johannes looked and sounded better than the plain John. Thus the hapless genealogist perusing old documents might conclude that he had found a German-born John, not an Englishman--and so overlook a missing ancestor.

The same spelling change would have applied to a female, say of the name Anne. A recorder might have been influenced by his training in ancient languages and decided that the simple English name Anne was better rendered as a Hannah or Johanna. Not at all favorable for the family researcher.

In our Phillips family history something of this sort occurred when Gabriel Phillips (almost certainly Welsh) married Hannah Brower, 1758, in a “German” church. The German minister, Heckler, wrote the Phillips surname Latinized or Germanized as Philipps instead of Phillips. It could be possible that Brower, too, was changed from the more English Brewer or maybe the surname was really Brouwer.

Until DNA analysis and other documentation proved that the name was correctly spelled Gabriel Phillips, there have been many researchers wrongly believing that our Gabriel Phillips was another Gabriel who was married to a Johanna Cook. Dare I ask: What’s in a name?