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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

This month, we continue a new feature in our newsletter: reviews of books that offer information on one or more branches of the Phillips family. These reviews will be occasionally published to tell readers which books might be of value by providing information on particular individuals. They are not intended to describe the literary quality of the book. Usually they will offer no guidance as to the accuracy of the book's information. We hope other readers will submit reviews of books they come across in the course of their research.

**A History of the Briggs and Phillips Families and Related Lines**, by Richard Dunn. RD Editions, 100 Oxford Circle, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185. 2008.  
*Reviewed by Sally Phillips, Phillips Family DNA Group 32*

This compilation covers branches of the Briggs, Phillips, Bennett, Arrington, Jones, Cherry, Dowling, Polk, Hale, and Dunn families. The Phillips documentation begins in North Carolina and Tennessee in 1842 and includes subsequent descendants. Phillips names in the index are: Aaron Aldney, Albert Thomas, Alma Lotie, Anna Jean, Annie, Betty Lisle, Briggs, Cornelia Kitura Flynt, Ed M., Grace Briggs, Grace Briggs, Jr., Ida Hull, J. W., James, Janice Marion, Jennifer, Jerry Thomas, Katie Polk, Kitura, Lee Briggs, Leslie Ann, Lotie, Lotie Alma, Lucille Bradford, Lydia, Mary Louise, Michael Jerome, Nina, Paul Edward, Paul Jerome, Paul Jerome, Jr., Richard, Robert, Robert Briggs, Robert Briggs II, Robert L., Robert Lee, Ruth, Sarah Esther, Victoria. It is available through local libraries by inter-library loan and, presumably, by purchase from the author. Here are notes on the book from the Family History Library Catalog: Robert Lee Phillips was born 30 April 1865 in Tennessee. He married Sarah Lotie Briggs in 1889 in Mississippi. They had eleven children. Ancestors, descendants and relatives lived mainly in Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi and Texas.

## **Who am I?**

*By David T. Phillips, Haplogroup G*

Genealogy is a compelling pastime full of questions with often an annoying scarcity of answers and sometimes it throws up an answer you least expect. My paternal Phillips pedigree is one hundred percent Welsh for six generations and I can trace my family back to James Phillips of

Carew, Pembrokeshire, Wales, born 1784. Getting back further into the 18th Century is my current ongoing project, which is proving difficult, so the offer of a free DNA test by the Phillips DNA Project was not to be ignored, as it could well assist in finding lost family connections in America.

I took the test in expectation of a standard Welsh Celtic haplotype but the result was Haplotype G2a3bla (G - 140). Not what I anticipated; however, not unusual for a Welshman, as I have since found out. Intriguingly, this group is represented in Wales in about 4% of tested Welsh males and is the biggest contribution to the United Kingdom overall percentage of 2%. Given its possible origin in the region of the Caucasus Mountains of Asia, it begs the question, how did this small percentage finger print get to the Principality of Wales?

The haplotype is distributed around the Mediterranean Sea and the Near East in varying quantities but is a minority haplotype. The Phillips DNA Project database has only four G haplotype candidates, so no American cousins for me as yet, but I do match one United Kingdom based singleton, Paul Phillips, at the 12 marker level, indicating we may have shared a common ancestor a thousand years ago, say 1012 AD. Evidently the G haplotype has a low frequency in populations wherever it is found, so the result therefore begs the question, *'Who am I?'*

I am definitely a Welsh man brought up in England but born of Welsh parents in Wales. My parents migrated from Wales to London during the Depression of the 1930's but my mother had the good sense to return to Wales for my birth, mainly influenced by Adolf Hitler's Luftwaffe dropping bombs on London. So when did my haplotype turn up in Wales? Very much a mystery - did it arrive early or was it a later migration? Several possibilities exist, ranging from a remnant of the original Neolithic farmer migration to northwest Europe from the southern zones following the retreat of the last Ice Age, the Roman conquest in AD 43 by Emperor Claudius, or the annexation of Wales by the Norman Marcher Lords. Or perhaps more simply a shipwreck of sailors of Mediterranean origin. So take your pick - in reality, the chances of finding the truth is nil.

The possibility of the G haplotype moving northward from the Mediterranean zone with Neolithic farmers of other haplotypes is feasible as the fertile land in what is now the British Isles would no doubt be attractive, but as far as I know, archaeological finds of Neolithic human bones yielding G Y-DNA have been limited to Continental Europe.

My romantic instinct is with Emperor Claudius's invasion of Britannia, since Roman Legions were made up of recruits from all over the Mediterranean region and eastern empire where the G haplotype is prevalent. The Romans had a special interest in Wales, as it had mineral deposits of Gold, Silver, Zinc, Lead, Iron and Copper. The Emperor had exclusive rights to mineral deposits of conquered territory; thus the ever hungry imperial treasury in Rome had a vested interest in the province being firmly under Roman military control.

The Romans did not wage war just to gain territory or the glory; they did it for commercial gain and booty. To this end they built substantial Legionary fortresses at Caerleon to house the Legio II Augusta in South East Wales, and also at Chester on the border of North Wales for the Legio XX Valeria Victrix as well as subsidiary forts in Carmarthen, West Wales and Caernarvon in North Wales. They undertook several attempts to pacify the Brythonic Welsh tribes, which proved difficult as the mountainous terrain favoured guerrilla warfare in which they excelled.

The Fortresses of Caerleon and Chester reputedly housed up to 5000 troops each, so the potential of haplotype G being present looks positive. Once indigenous tribes of Wales were pacified, they proceeded to mine Gold at Doluacothi in West Wales, which shows archaeological evidence of Roman Engineering being applied for the extraction of the Gold-bearing Quartz veins. Copper deposits were also exploited in North Wales along with Lead, Silver and Zinc. The Romans remained in Wales for over three hundred years, so fraternisation with the indigenous tribes was a certainty. The Romans often allotted farm land to Legionnaires when demobilised on active service in the area of their last posting - a clever way of stabilising frontier territory with Roman citizens.

Another factor which cannot be ignored is small concentrations of G haplotype in the North East of England in the vicinity of Hadrian's Wall, which was garrisoned by Roman legionnaires and Auxiliaries. A legacy of their occupation is borrowed words from the Latin lexicon still in the Welsh language, such as Pont for bridge. Another legacy is that Wales was a Christian country long before the arrival of St. Augustine to convert the neighbouring pagan Anglo Saxons of England. The occupation had a profound effect on the Welsh as three hundred years is a long period of time in human affairs, covering possibly six or more generations, which gives plenty of scope for the fingerprint of G Y-DNA to establish itself, albeit in very low frequency.

In AD 212, the Emperor Caracalla issued an edict bestowing citizenship on all freemen of the Empire; thus a Welshman could call himself a citizen of the Imperial Roman Empire, not something his Saxon neighbours in England can boast. In fact, the Saxon word for the Brythonic Celts was Wealas, meaning foreigner or indeed any Roman. Significantly, the G haplotype in the population of Northern Europe drops off dramatically once you cross the extent of the borders of the old Roman Empire; thus G is a rarity in places such as Scandinavia, which lends strength to the theory of it being spread by the invading Romans.

The other strong possibility is the annexation of the fertile lowland areas of coastal Wales by the Norman hierarchy. William the Conqueror established Marcher Lords along the boundary between Wales and Norman England in much the same way as the Romans had built their legionary forts to contain the Welsh and later annexed Welsh territory at will. The Norman expeditionary force which subdued the Saxons in 1066 contained not only Normans but Flemings, Bretons (Tribal brethren of the Welsh), French and mercenaries as far away way as Italy, another potential source of haplotype G.

The Normans built more castles in Wales than anywhere in England, over four hundred were constructed between the 11th and 14th centuries to keep in check the recalcitrant Welsh. A hundred or so still remain as ruins or intact as preserved monuments. South Pembrokeshire was Anglicised with the settlement of former mercenaries; thus the first language gradually became English and the area was known as Little England beyond Wales. The area was the embarkation point for Southern Ireland with a large castle being constructed in Pembroke to defend the port as the area was of strategic political and military importance. The division between the North and South of Pembrokeshire was a line called the Landsker. As my forebears lived within the Landsker territory, an infusion of the G haplotype from this source could well be the answer.

The suggestion that it came from ship-wrecked Mediterranean origin sailors is not as farfetched as it looks, as that sort of incident along the rocky western coast line of the British Isles did happen coupled with fact that Pembroke was a port; thus trade traffic from Spain and the Mediterranean was not unknown.

Well, I will never know for certain but it's fun to speculate and the subject makes a good after-dinner conversation piece, "Do you know I might have Roman blood in my veins!"

## Jack Phillips and the Titanic

From Wikipedia at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack\\_Phillips\\_\(wireless\\_officer\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Phillips_(wireless_officer))



John George "Jack" Phillips (11 April 1887 - 15 April 1912) was a British wireless telegraphist aboard RMS *Titanic*, who died after the ship hit an iceberg and sank; he was serving as senior wireless operator on the maiden voyage of the ship. As the *Titanic* was sinking, Phillips

worked tirelessly to send wireless messages to other ships to enlist their assistance with the rescue of the *Titanic's* passengers and crew. While Phillips has borne criticism for having told the radio operator of the *Californian*, "Shut up! I am busy, I am working Cape Race!" when interrupted on-air by his counterpart telling him that his ship was surrounded by ice, similar warning messages earlier that day had been delivered to the captain and a lookout had been posted.

John George "Jack" Phillips was born in Farncombe, Surrey, England to George Alfred Phillips and Anne Sanders. Phillips finished private school in Cranleigh in 1902 and began working at the Godalming post office where he learned telegraphy. He started training to work in wireless for the Marconi Company in March 1906 in Seaforth and graduated five months later in August.

Phillips' first assignment was on the White Star Line ship *Teutonic* and he later worked on board the *Campania*, the *Corsican*, the *Victorian*, the *Pretorian*, the *Lusitania* and the *Mauretania*. In May 1908, he was assigned to the Marconi station outside Clifden, Ireland, where he worked until 1911, when he was assigned to the RMS *Adriatic* and later, in early 1912, to the *Oceanic*.

In March 1912, Phillips was sent to Belfast, Ireland, to be the senior wireless operator on board the *Titanic* for her maiden voyage. He was joined by junior wireless operator Harold Bride. Stories have appeared that Phillips knew Bride before the *Titanic*, but Bride insisted they had never met before Belfast. The *Titanic* sailed for New York City from Southampton, England, on 10 April 1912 and during the voyage Phillips and Bride sent out passengers' personal messages and received iceberg warnings and other navigational information from other ships. Phillips celebrated his 25th birthday the day after the voyage began.

On the evening of 14 April, in the wireless room on the boat deck, Phillips was sending messages to Cape Race, Newfoundland, working to clear a backlog of passengers' personal messages that had accumulated when the wireless had broken down the day before. Bride was asleep in the adjoining cabin, intending to relieve Phillips at midnight, two hours early. Shortly after 9:30 pm, Phillips received an ice warning from the steamship *Mesaba* reporting a large number of icebergs and an ice field directly in the path of *Titanic*. Phillips acknowledged the *Mesaba's* warning and continued to transmit messages to Cape Race. The *Mesaba's* wireless operator waited for Phillips to report that he had given the report to the bridge, but Phillips continued working Cape Race. The message was one of the most important warnings the *Titanic* received, but it was never delivered to the bridge.

Second Officer (Second Mate) Charles Lightoller reports in Chapter 31 of his autobiography: Later, when standing with others on the upturned boat, Phillips explained when I said that I did not recollect any *Mesaba* report: "I just put the message under a paper weight at my elbow, just until I squared up what I was doing before sending it to the Bridge." That delay proved fatal and was the main contributory cause to the loss of that magnificent ship and hundreds of lives. Had I as Officer of the Watch, or the Captain, become aware of the peril lying so close

ahead and not instantly slowed down or stopped, we should have been guilty of culpable and criminal negligence.

After 11:00 pm, Phillips was again interrupted by another ship, this time the *SS Californian*. The *Californian's* only wireless operator, Cyril Evans, was reporting that they were stopped and surrounded by ice. *Californian's* relative proximity (and the fact that both Evans and Phillips were using spark gap wireless sets whose signals bled across the spectrum and were impossible to tune out) meant that the signal was strong and loud in Phillips' ears. Phillips quickly sent back, "Shut up, shut up, I am busy working Cape Race!" and continued communicating with Cape Race while Evans listened a while longer before going to bed for the night.

Some argue that this communication had important consequences. Firstly, that Evans was giving a warning of ice, which if heeded could have prevented *Titanic's* sinking. Secondly, *Californian* was the closest ship to *Titanic*. As the radio had been switched off by Evans, Phillips had no way of communicating with *Californian* should *Titanic* require immediate assistance, which it very soon did. Others point out that several ice warnings had already been received and communicated to the captain, so he was aware that there was ice in the area, and a lookout had been posted. Further, the crew of the *Californian* did see the flares from the *Titanic* at 12:45 AM and woke their captain, who chose to ignore the flares and returned to bed.

*Titanic* struck an iceberg at 11:40 pm that night and began sinking. Bride had woken up and began getting ready to relieve Phillips when Captain Edward Smith came into the wireless room and told Phillips to prepare to send out a distress signal. Shortly after midnight, Captain Smith came in again and told them to send out the call for assistance and gave them *Titanic's* estimated position. Phillips began sending out the distress signal, code CQD, while Bride took messages to Captain Smith about which ships were coming to *Titanic's* assistance. At one point, Bride jokingly reminded Phillips that the new call was SOS and said "Send SOS, it's the new call, and it may be your last chance to send it." A myth developed after the disaster that this was the first time SOS was used, but it had been used on other ships previously.

After taking a quick break, Phillips returned to the wireless room, reporting to Bride that the forward part of the ship was flooded and that they should put on more clothes and lifebelts. Bride began to get ready while Phillips went back to work on the wireless machine. The wireless power was almost completely out shortly after 2:00 am when Captain Smith arrived and told the men that they had done their duty and that they were relieved. Bride later remembered being moved by the way Phillips continued working. While their backs were turned, a crew member (either a stoker or trimmer) sneaked in and attempted to steal Phillips' lifebelt. Bride saw and grabbed the man as Phillips stood up and knocked the crew member out. The water was beginning to flood the wireless room as they both ran out of the wireless room, leaving the unconscious crewman where he fell. The men then split up, Bride heading forward and Phillips heading aft.



Phillips managed to make it to the overturned lifeboat B, which was in the charge of Second Officer Charles Lightoller, along with Harold Bride. In Lightoller's autobiography, *Titanic and Other Ships*, he writes,

*"Phillips, the senior wireless operator, standing near me, told me the different ships that had answered our call..."*

*"...As it turned out, the information from Phillips, and the calculation, were about right, though poor old Phillips did not live to benefit by it. He hung on till daylight came in and we sighted one of the lifeboats in the distance..."*

*"...I think it must have been the final and terrible anxiety that tipped the beam with Phillips, for he suddenly slipped down, sitting in the water, and though we held his head up, he never recovered. I insisted on taking him into the lifeboat with us, hoping there still might be life, but it was too late."*