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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

The holiday season is upon us! Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Joyous Kwanzaa to one and all! Keep in mind that Family Tree DNA is running a holiday promotion on DNA tests and a DNA test kit makes an interesting and unusual present. If you need help ordering one as a present, please don't hesitate to contact us.

As we approach the end of 2009, it is an appropriate time to review the status of our Phillips DNA project. As of December 1st, we have 418 members in our project hosted by Family Tree DNA, which makes us the 12th largest surname project at FTDNA. In addition to our FTDNA participants, we have another 30 or 40 members who have been tested by other companies such as Ancestry.com and Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation. Using DNA analysis, we have identified 62 different, unrelated Phillips family groups. This corroborates the belief that the surname Phillips is a patronymic surname adopted over time by different, unrelated men who had fathers bearing the first name Phillip or Philip.

In addition to our family groups, we have over 120 Phillips men in the project who do not match any other Phillips men in the project. We call these men Singletons and they represent approximately 27% of the membership. The percentage of unmatched Singletons has been remarkably stable right from the beginning of the project and may partially reflect the accumulated impact of non-paternal events over the course of time. Although population scientists believe non-paternal events such as illegitimacy and adoption only occur at a rate of approximately 3% per generation, the effect of that 3% snowballs over time so that at the end of 10 generations, as many as 28.5% of the men of any given family group may no longer carry the yDNA of that family group.

It is also informative to take a look at the different haplogroups found in our Phillips DNA project. Haplogroup is similar to nationality and refers to a group of people who can be associated with a particular geographic area. You might think of haplogroups as the limbs of the tree of Homo sapiens, keeping in mind that people who belong to different haplogroups cannot be related to each other within thousands of years. There are yDNA or male haplogroups and mtDNA or female haplogroups.

About 72% of the male participants in the Phillips DNA project belong to various subclades of Haplogroup R1b, which is the most common haplogroup in Western Europe and the British Isles. Haplogroup I and its subclades make up our second biggest haplogroup, comprising about 20% of our participants. Haplogroup I is considered to be a Scandinavian and Central European haplogroup. The presence of Haplogroup I in the British Isles is believed to be the result of

Viking and Anglo-Saxon invasions over the centuries. The remaining 8% of the members of our Phillips DNA project belong to an assortment of different haplogroups including Haplogroups A, E, G, J, Q, and R1a. Descriptions of these different haplogroups can be found on our website at this link:

<http://www.phillipsdnaproject.com/faq-sections/27-dna-questions-faqs/114-haplogroup-migration-map>

I am very proud of our project and feel we have made great progress so far. We are growing at a rate of 5 to 10 new members a month. However, we may not be able to sustain that growth rate in the future. Bennett Greenspan, the president of Family Tree DNA, believes the rate of growth in DNA testing may slow down in general, since he believes the majority of those who are interested in DNA testing for genealogical purposes have already gotten tested. This may be true, but I believe if we all actively continue to encourage men named Phillips to get DNA tested, we will continue to grow. And growth is very important, because finding matches is a numbers game. The larger the database, the more likely we are to find our genetic cousins from around the world.

Questions and Answers

Question: How accurate is DNA testing?

Answer: The testing procedures are very accurate. However, there is always a slight chance of human error in the lab. Examples are sample switches, misreading certain alleles, and other clerical errors.

Question: Does taking antibiotics affect a DNA test?

Answer: No. Your samples and/or the analysis of your DNA will not be affected by any medications you are taking.

Question: Is it absolutely necessary to wait three hours between cheek scrapings?

Answer: It is not absolutely necessary, but the longer you wait, the better. The loose cheek cells are collected with the first sample and if you do the second one too soon after the first, you will not get nearly the same quality DNA sample as you did with the first. This is also why the lab recommends that you do not eat, drink or brush your teeth for 30 minutes before doing the scraping.

Question: How many different tests can be run on the original samples sent to the lab? I am worried about using up all of my 85-year-old uncle's samples. I want to have enough cheek cells left in storage for future tests that may be developed.

Answer: Considering that FTDNA now sends three vials to a participant, there should be enough for many tests unless there is a poor scraping.

Question: Based on your experience as an administrator, how long does it take for a sample to be processed by the lab?

Answer: As you probably know, FTDNA says to allow six to eight weeks for the lab to complete the processing after the lab has RECEIVED the samples, NOT the date from which the kit is mailed to the recipient. In my experience, the results sometimes come back in four weeks if the person has only ordered 12 markers and his DNA turns out to be fairly common. If he has ordered more markers and/or his DNA turns out to be somewhat more unusual, it may take longer. I think they probably rerun the tests if the DNA looks unusual.

Question: I got my father tested and his haplogroup should be the same as mine but there is a dash in his haplogroup column. Why?

Answer: The lab populates the chart at FTDNA with haplogroup designations and the values for the different markers. Project administrators have no control over this. Sometimes the lab is slow to assign a haplogroup, but I am confident they will eventually show the same haplogroup for him as they do for you.

Featured Phillips Family Story

The Story of John Phillips born circa 1826 as told to Ann Phillips by Ardelia Phillips Short 17 July 1976

By Linda H. Phillips

Phillips Family Group 10

John was born around 1815 (guess) in the mountains of North Carolina. His mother's last name was Snow and she was a Cherokee Indian. John Phillips was an only child by his mother and father. Nothing much was known about his father other than his name was Phillips and was a white man. If this story was true, Wade's (Ann's husband) great-grandfather was 1/2 Cherokee Indian (guess).

John's mother (Snow) died when John was three (3) days old. John was reared by an uncle. (Don't know what side of the family). At the age of fifteen (15) John, along with others (don't know who) settled in what is now Wise County, Virginia.

John married Sarah Elizabeth Hay (don't know what year). Of this marriage eight (8) children were born alive, some dead. Living children were George, Emma, Charlie, Riley, Helen, Ambrose, Patton, and Mary Jane.

John Phillips could do a lot of Indian dances and knew Indian calls. The only time he would do them is if you could get him drunk.

This information was given to me by Ardelia Phillips Short, age 80, from Pound, Virginia. Ardelia's father was George Phillips, brother to Ambrose. Ardelia Phillips Short married Lindsay

Short and Lindsay's sister Maudie Mae was Wade Phillips' mother. Ardelia had pictures of John and Sarah Elizabeth Hay Phillips and of most of the Phillips generation. She had no names on these pictures. She remembered all of them from what had been told her. John Phillips settled in Wise County in the area which is now called Phillips Creek. He owned lots of land but gave lots of it away. He would trade acres of his land for a shot gun or a horse. He moved many times on his own land. When he would trade land and people would move too close to him, he would just build another house further away from people.

According to another paper received from Ann Phillips, John was raised by his mother's family until he was 15. He left North Carolina on a cattle drive and went into what is now Wise County, Virginia. Wade Phillips was the son of William Patton Phillips and Maudie Mae Short. William Patton was the son of Ambrose Phillips, son of John and Sarah Phillips. Other members of the Phillips family have told me that they remember their parents telling them that they were related to the Snows of North Carolina so most likely John's mother was a Snow.

John was born around 1825/26 in Surry County, North Carolina (near Mt. Airy). This information was obtained from the death certificates of three of his children. There was a marriage bond in Wilkes County, North Carolina in 1825 for a Judith Snow to a Meredith Phillips. Meredith was believed to be the son of Stephen and Sibby Phillips who settled in Russell County, Virginia (now Wise County) around 1827-1828. In the 1830 census of Russell County, Stephan was listed with a young boy under the age of 5 years. Stephen died before 1840 and his wife Sibby had in her home in 1840, a boy between the ages of 10-15. I've always believed that this boy was most likely John Phillips; however, the story above would indicate that it was not.

John appeared for the first time by name in the 1850 census. He was working for the Gibson family and was only a few doors away from Sarah Hay's family. John married Sarah very shortly thereafter. Since the marriage bonds of Russell County, Virginia were lost years ago, there is no proof of the exact date. In the 1900 census, Sarah indicated that she had been married fifty years so John and Sarah most likely married in late 1850 or early 1851. Sarah also indicated that she had given birth to nine children and only eight were living. John was dead by 1900 so I assume he died shortly before the census. Sarah was alive in the 1910 census; however, she died prior to June 1912. There were no death certificates issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia from 1896 to June 1912. Tombstones with dates for John and Sarah were recently purchased by Sammie Phillips of Wise, Virginia. Many of the Phillips family are buried in what is now called the Phillips/Standefer Cemetery on Phillips Creek; however, it was originally called the Boggs Cemetery (taken from death certificates).

When Stephen and Sibby Phillips arrived in Russell County, their son John, born 1807, also came. In addition, several of their daughters came with their families. Alcey Phillips Burchett (Leonard); Mary Ann Phillips Harris (Squire); Abigail Phillips Logan (James) and Peggy Phillips are all listed in the 1840 and 1850 census. Peggy never married. The ironic thing was all of these children named a son Meredith. Most likely this was in honor of their dead brother. It was odd that John and Sarah did not name a child Meredith or Judith unless they used one of these names for the child that died.

It is my opinion that John Phillips who married Sarah “Sally” Elizabeth Hay was the son of Meredith Phillips and Judith Snow and the grandson of Stephen and Sibby Phillips. I studied the records of Surry County, North Carolina and could find no wills, deeds or other documents that tied our John to the Snow family. Obediah Snow of Surry County, North Carolina did have a daughter named Judah. All of the Snow genealogy researchers do not know what happened to Judah. In 1823, she was mentioned in a Court document filed in Surry County as the daughter of Obediah Snow. Obediah did not leave a will; however, he did make arrangements for the care of his children through this court document. Judah was born circa 1805.

I have ordered a copy of the original marriage bond for Meredith Phillips to Judith Snow but it probably will not reveal any information that I do not already have. The bondsman on Meredith Phillips’ marriage bond was Larkin Manord. Larkin Manord married Phoebe Phillips, thought to be the daughter of Stephen and Sibby Phillips. There were many Snows in Surry County, North Carolina with names like Frost Snow but none of them had Indian blood. If John’s mother had Indian blood, it was probably a very small amount. Most of the pictures I’ve seen of John and Sarah’s children bear no resemblance to someone with Indian blood. Most of the descendents of John and Sarah were blonde or red haired and blue eyed.

Genealogy Jokes

My family coat of arms ties at the back....is that normal?

My family tree is a few branches short! All help appreciated.

My ancestors must be in a witness protection program!

Shake your family tree and watch the nuts fall!

My hobby is genealogy; I raise dust bunnies as pets.

I looked into my family tree and found out I was a sap.

I'm not stuck; I'm ancestrally challenged.

If only ancestors came with pull-down menus and on-line help...

Isn't genealogy fun? The answer to one problem, leads to two more!

A family reunion is an effective form of birth control.

A family tree can wither if nobody tends its roots.

A new cousin a day keeps the boredom away.

After 30 days, unclaimed ancestors will be adopted.

Any family tree produces some lemons, some nuts and a few bad apples.

Ever find an ancestor HANGING from the family tree?

Floor: The place for storing your priceless genealogy records.

Gene-Allergy: It's a contagious disease, but I love it!

Genealogists are time unravelers.

Genealogy is like playing hide and seek: They hide... I seek!

"Crazy" is a relative term in my family...

A pack rat is hard to live with, but makes a fine ancestor!

I want to find ALL of them! So far I only have a few thousand.

I should have asked them BEFORE they died!

I think my ancestors had several "bad heir" days.

I'm always late. My ancestors arrived on the JUNEflower.

Only a Genealogist regards a step backwards as progress.

Heredity: Everyone believes in it until their children act like fools!