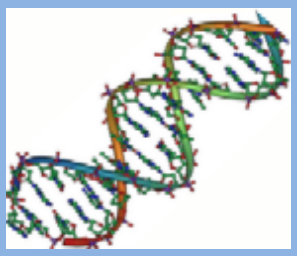

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Phillips DNA News

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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 Canada Day to all our Canadian readers and Happy 4th of July to all our American readers! Hope everyone in the Northern Hemisphere is enjoying the long, lazy days of summer.

Our Phillips DNA project continues to grow at a nice clip and we now have over 465 participants, including more than thirty who live in the British Isles, ten who live in Canada, six who live in Australia, three who live in New Zealand, three who live in Costa Rica, one who lives in Mexico, one who lives in Thailand, and one who lives in Japan.

We are doing everything we can think of to advertise our Phillips DNA project online to attract more participants. Our main website is at www.phillipsdnaproject.com but we have also set up a Facebook page that is managed by our co-administrator Virginia Phillips-Smith. Our other co-administrator Tom Hutchison set up a Phillips group at Ancestry.com. We joined the Guild of One-Name Studies and set up a website on their platform. We have a website set up at World Families and we also maintain our original website on the Family Tree DNA platform.

Now we have decided to try a new concept called a wiki. Most internet users have come across Wikipedia, the online free encyclopedia. Maybe some of our project members have even contributed to Wikipedia. The software used by Wikipedia is called MediaWiki, designed for easy to view and update informative web pages. By definition, a wiki (WIK-ee) is a website that allows the easy creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages via a web browser using a simplified markup language or a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) text editor. Wikis are often used to create collaborative wiki websites, to power community websites, for personal note taking, in corporate intranets, and in knowledge management systems.

As the Phillips project continues to grow and family groups become larger and more complex, one method of collaboration could be a wiki. There is one wiki site already in use for family and genealogy work, http://familypedia.wikia.com. The Phillips DNA Project has created a page at familypedia. Here is the address:

http://familypedia.wikia.com/wiki/Phillips_DNA_Project.

Remember, the whole point of a wiki is collaboration, improving and sharing more information. A wiki page is never really done, but a work in progress. It would be nice to see some of the project members improve our DNA project's page at familypedia and we invite you to do so.

Don't worry; you can preview your changes before you save them. There is also something called a revision history in wikis; essentially, you can look at previous versions for comparisons and revert to an earlier version of the page if needed.

Tom Hutchison is currently trying to evaluate the MediaWiki software for use by the Phillips project. We need some input from you, the members. Are you interested, are you intrigued or curious? Would your family group like to use a wiki to collaborate? If you're a singleton with no matches, would you like a place to post some family information and organize your research? Tom also has a wiki under construction for the Early NC Phillips Families Discussion Group. If your Phillips came through North Carolina in the early years and you want to participate in the group or you just want to take a sneak peak, let Tom or me know and one of us can provide you with the web address.

Questions and Answers

Question: To date, if I am correct, of those who have tested 37 markers in Family Group 25, the Cantrells never match any of us at 100% probability back to 24 generations. According to what I see, that data takes us back to the year 1290. If we look at the late 1700s and early 1800s which is approximately 11 generations ago, the probability drops to 97.36%. Until someone does DNA testing that shows a 100% match to me, I am not going to focus on one surname.

Answer: What the 97.36% probability means is that your Most Recent Common Ancestor (MRCA) is within 11 generations, not necessarily as far out as 11 generations. The MRCA could be much nearer. In other words, the 97.36% probability means your common ancestor lived between now and about 300 years ago. There is only a 2.64% chance that he lived more than 300 years ago.

You should not put too much emphasis on 100% probability, because FTDNA uses extremely conservative estimates when predicting relatedness. In fact, we have a father and son in the project who match each other on 12 out of 12 markers, and FTDNA only gives them the following predictions of relatedness generation by generation. As you can see, FTDNA never gives them a 100% chance of being related:

Generations	Percentage
1	9.72%
2	18.50%
3	26.42%
4	33.57%
5	40.03%
6	45.86%
7	51.13%

Generations	Percentage
8	55.88%
9	60.17%
10	64.04%
11	67.54%
12	70.69%
13	73.54%
14	76.11%
15	78.44%
16	80.53%
17	82.43%
18	84.13%
19	85.68%
20	87.07%
21	88.33%
22	89.46%
23	90.49%
24	91.41%

We also have two brothers who have gotten tested, and their results are even more illuminating, because they both tested 37 markers and they match perfectly at 37 markers. Here are their estimates of relatedness calculated per generation by FTDNA:

Generations	Percentage
1	36.26%
2	59.37%
3	74.10%
4	83.49%
5	89.48%
6	93.29%
7	95.73%
8	97.28%
9	98.26%
10	98.89%
11	99.29%
13	99.71%

Generations	Percentage
14	99.82%
15	99.88%
16	99.93%
17	99.95%
18	99.97%
19	99.98%
20	99.99%
21	99.99%
22	100.00%
23	100.00%
24	100.00%

As you can see, FTDNA only gives these two brothers a 36.26% chance of being related within one generation. FTDNA does not give them a 100% chance of being related until 22 generations have elapsed, which equals about 550 to 660 years.

In practice, it turns out that an 80% chance of being related is very prognostic by Family Tree DNA standards. I am writing about this in the newsletter so that people will better understand how difficult it is to get a prediction of 100% probability from FTDNA. Thanks for giving me this idea.

Featured Family Story

Tracing my Ancestors with Y-DNA Help, Part III
By Roger Phillips, Family Group 1

This is my third success story regarding the use of Y-DNA to identify distant Phillips relations of mine. In earlier accounts, I described how I confirmed I was descended from a Thomas Phillips who died in Greater London in 1763 by comparing my Y-DNA with that of another Phillips who I suspected was also descended from him but through a different son than the one from whom I believed I was descended. In a second successful use of Y-DNA, I was able to prove my relationship to a family that spent several generations in India and used the surname "Pengelly-Phillips".

Now I have been able to confirm a large number of distant Phillips relatives in New Zealand. As with all genealogical detective work, one must depend on many tools. Having confirmed that descendants of William Phillips (1752-1828), son of the Thomas Phillips mentioned above, were

indeed my relatives based on the fact that William's brother Joseph (1755-96) was my 4th great grandfather, I set about trying to document all of William's descendants.

I, of course, had one line of descendants already documented who I had used to confirm the William-Joseph connection through a son of William by his third wife. I now pushed forward in looking for descendants of William's son by his first marriage, William Joseph George Phillips (1779-1885). Using U.K. census information and an extensive scouring of the General Register Office Index (both on ancestry.com), I pieced together a fairly full account save for two individuals, sons of WJGP's middle son Francis Roberts Phillips (1811-62). The descendants I had located were all in lines that had "daughtered out" so my only hope lay in finding still living male descendants of one of these sons.

Unfortunately, Francis Roberts Phillips, a Church of England vicar, was not too fastidious in reporting births of his children (compulsory registration of births in England commenced only in 1875, although from September 1837 voluntary civil registration was widely used). In the case of the two sons, I knew from decennial census records that there were at least two boys that I hadn't otherwise come across. The first was recorded as "Windham" aged one in 1841 and "Windham Jn" [presumably short for John] aged 10 in 1851. I finally ascertained that his birth had been reported for civil registration as "Boy". There was no sign of him in 1861, nor any reported death between the 1851 and 1861 censuses.

After many frustrating unsuccessful searches, I gave up, concluding that he had either emigrated or died without record. A few years later my wife, on a visit to England, was looking for information on WJGP's properties at the Hampshire Register Office. Scanning a list of Phillips documents, her eye fell on the name Windham Francis Phillips – the "Windham" rang a bell and she requested a copy. It turned out to be a power of attorney executed in New Zealand relating to the estate of Francis Roberts Phillips who had died in Hampshire! We immediately concluded that either the census taker had erred in recording the name "Windham Jn" or that not liking "John" Windham had appropriated Francis as his middle name.

Although we couldn't find a Windham Francis Phillips in the 1861 census, we discovered him in the London Gazette (searchable online) as a military officer who had resigned his commission in 1862. Switching to New Zealand, we located a newspaper reference on a website of old New Zealand publications that read "*An old settler named Wyndham Phillips fell dead in his chair at dinner yesterday. He suffered from heart disease*" dated 1884. Going to the New Zealand BDM online (www.dia.govt.nz), I soon found his death record indexed, which I ordered.

When the mail arrived, I discovered that the New Zealand method of death registration includes showing the names of the deceased's parents and the spouse's name as well as the names of any children and their ages. Sure enough, the departed Windham Francis Phillips was the son of Francis Phillips and his wife Mary Lukin, so I had found my man! There were three sons and no daughters, giving me a good start on going further down the tree.

I soon hit another road block. For “privacy” reasons New Zealand indexes on the internet are restricted to “historical” as follows:

Births that occurred at least 100 years ago
Marriages that occurred at least 80 years ago
Deaths that occurred at least 50 years ago or the deceased's date of birth was at least 80 years ago

I ordered all the birth, marriage, or death certificates that were pertinent and set about using the internet to scour for published obituaries, wills, etc. I also discovered that further index information was available at certain libraries and/or archives in New Zealand in the form of fiches, and from about 1992 on computers. I used a New Zealand genealogist to search these but the indexes contained scant information and only by cross referencing with other info could one make educated guesses as to which Phillips birth was the one I needed.

I then discovered that through a complicated procedure involving a “referee” who completes part of the request for certificates, I could order by mail “non-historical” (i.e. more recent than “historical” listed above) certificates. I did so using a friend who is a Canadian lawyer living near me as “referee”. One of the female descendants I discovered married someone with an uncommon surname and looking at the internet New Zealand phone directory (which gives only initials and surname, often just one initial), I wrote to everyone with that surname and got an answer from one who was a Phillips relative and got more names and dates. The website www.oldfriends.co.nz and Facebook also helped me find people, as did letters to cemeteries. In the end I even advertised twice for persons whose birth I had found but didn’t know their whereabouts – fortunately both times I was successful.

I now had what seemed to be a complete tree for all of Windham Francis Phillips’s descendants, including some no longer in New Zealand and living in Australia and the United States. The question remained – given that the tree was partially completed by “word of mouth” rather than documented births and marriages, were today’s supposed living descendants really members of my extended Phillips family?

I picked one of my male sixth cousins and he agreed to submit his Y-DNA. The answer came in three installments. First he matched me on all 12 of the first markers, then on all 25, and finally on all 37! As a sixth cousin with a complete 37 marker match to me although other closer cousins, while matching on the first twelve, deviated by one or two markers, it is fair to conclude he and I have the non-mutated DNA of our fifth great grandfather Thomas Phillips, while our other cousins have slightly mutated DNA.

An interesting sidelight: one of the female living Phillips I discovered told me she had gone back to the Hampshire, England, church where Francis Roberts Phillips, father of Windham Francis Phillips, had been the vicar. There she heard a local story that he had been discovered dead in the bed of a younger female parishioner and a church employee had had the body

moved to his home before calling for a doctor to declare him dead. I subsequently discovered a newspaper account from the time that more or less confirms the tale.

I should record that through further internet searches I found out how Windham Francis Phillips got to New Zealand. His British regiment was posted to Melbourne, Australia, and there he resigned in order to join an Australian regiment that was being sent to New Zealand to repel Maori attacks on the sparse British settlement there. Offered land as an inducement to stay there and settle, many of the soldiers including him did just that.

Attentive readers will note that I referred to two sons of Francis Roberts Phillips that I couldn't trace. The second one remains a mystery. His birth and baptism as Stuart Tanqueray Lionel Phillips born in 1849 was located in church records and he is last found as "Lionel" in the 1871 census. Members of the Phillips project should keep on soliciting Y-DNA from other Phillips they meet – who knows, we may someday find one of his descendants!

Guest Column

Is Your Genealogy Database Insane?
By Richard W. Eastman

The following article is from Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter and is copyright by Richard W. Eastman. It is re-published here with the permission of the author. Information about the newsletter is available at http://www.eogn.com.

I'd like to make a bet with every reader of this newsletter: I'll bet five bucks that you have errors in your genealogy database. Keep in mind that I am not a gambler; I only bet on "sure things." In this case, I am sure that I could win at least 90% of the bets, guaranteeing that I could then afford a vacation on some sun-drenched tropical isle.

I get to see a lot of genealogy databases and a lot of online genealogy information. Almost all of the data I see has errors. Luckily, many of these errors are easy to find with just a bit of electronic assistance from your computer.

I am not talking about subtle errors that require extensive genealogy research to resolve. Instead, I am referring to obvious errors. They can be called "crazy errors:" claims of mothers giving birth at the age of three, men fathering children at the age of 85, children being born before their parents' births, and other such "facts" that defy logic.

Not all of these errors are caused by sloppy genealogy research. They can be simple typo errors. For instance, I suffer from a disease that I call "dyslexia of the keyboard." While I know how to spell most English words and almost always know the correct dates when I am entering data into my favorite genealogy program, what appears on my computer screen often has two or more keystrokes reversed! The most used key on my keyboard is BACKSPACE! Yes, I have created silly errors in my genealogy database in times past, and I am a bit embarrassed at

how long it took me to discover and correct those errors. Looking at other genealogy databases, it looks like I have plenty of company!

Most of these errors can be identified within a very few minutes. The only complexity involved in checking your data is the number of facts involved. If you have 1,000 people in your database, then you probably have at least 10,000 facts.

You do not need to manually look through your database of 10,000 or more facts in search of each and every error. Most of today's genealogy programs will do that for you. Most programs have a "sanity check" or some similarly-named "search for obvious errors" function that will find the more flagrant problems in your data.

The name used will vary from one genealogy program to another. In some programs, it may be called a "Possible Problems" report while another may say a "Data Errors" report and still another might have a "Verify the Database" report. One program refers to a "Potential Problems" report, and another contains a "Problem List." Whatever the terminology, almost all of today's genealogy programs have the capability to search the database looking for obvious errors.

Of course, you do have to stop and verify each error manually. For instance, one program I know of defaults to looking for young women who supposedly gave birth before the age of sixteen years. That may be an indication of potential errors for some but anyone with French-Canadian ancestry can find many legitimate records of mothers being younger than sixteen when giving birth. One of them would be my French-Canadian grandmother who personally told me about giving birth at fifteen. Such events were common amongst French-Canadians and my database contains many entries for new mothers aged fifteen and a few who were even younger.

Whatever program you use, take a look at its "sanity report." Some programs allow the user to adjust the parameters. Before I run the "sanity report" on my database that contains hundreds of records of French-Canadian births, marriages, and deaths, I have to adjust the parameter for women giving birth to be age thirteen or younger. You may have to do something similar for your database, depending upon the habits of your ancestors.

Before you embarrass yourself by publishing erroneous data or by sharing it with others, I would strongly suggest that you run a "sanity check" on your database. You will be glad that you did.