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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

It's the Merry Month of May! This is Nancy Kiser, volunteer administrator of your Phillips DNA Project. Our project is continuing to grow at a rate of approximately five to ten new members a month, which is very gratifying in this tough economy. We have several British yDNA tests that are currently being processed. We just added our 50<sup>th</sup> Phillips Family Group. In addition, we have over 100 members who do not have any Phillips matches in our database. Roughly 75% of our members belong to Haplogroup R1b, which is the most common haplogroup in Western Europe and the British Isles.

We subscribe to a free service called Histats that tracks the number of visitors to our new Phillips DNA Project website. It tells us where our visitors come from, how long they view our website, what pages they look at, and a ton of other information. It is very interesting. Here are some of the stats. Since the creation of our new website in February, we have had 2,415 visitors, 89% of whom live in the USA. The average number of pages viewed per visit is five. Our most popular page is our home page and our second most popular page is our yLineages page. Google sent us 12.5% of our visitors. Ancestry/rootsweb sent another 7.8% and Genforum sent 4.8%.

For those of you who tested through FTDNA, they have just introduced some new features on your personal page. You will see Plot Ancestral Locations and Maps on the left sidebar of your personal page with the word NEW in orange beside them. You can plot the place of birth or death of your earliest known paternal or maternal ancestor and then zoom in to a street level to look at it. Very cool. My Maps shows the places to which relatives of your ancestors have spread, if other descendants have also entered the location of their earliest known paternal or maternal ancestors. The push pin matches will be color coded to indicate your genetic distance from each relative.

There is also a new Personalized Genealogy Report feature. For \$349, an independent contractor named Roberta Estes will prepare a customized explanation of your yDNA or mtDNA results, what the results tell you about your deep ancestry, and perhaps a little about your more recent genealogy. You participate in the customization of the report by providing genealogy, photos and by asking questions that will be answered in the report. Your report will be 30 to 50 pages long and will contain:

- An explanation of how DNA testing works
- What are mutations and why are they important
- Mutations explained and compared - which mutations are rare, which are important, which are not
- Introduction to Y-DNA and Mitochondrial lines and how client is related

- Detailed information on deep ancestry and migration routes, complete with relevant history, photos - related to the individual's lines
- Limited genealogical research
- Checking all relevant databases for matching purposes
- Recent ethnic origins discussion and relevance
- Interpretation of results in "My maps" - provided that the matches included their geographical information
- When the client's ancestral surname is of European origin, when possible, a geographic analysis of where surname clusters occur
- Interpretation of "My matches" section
- Analysis and Discussion - this is completely determined by the findings above and may include additional research if relevant
- DNA Pedigree chart
- Summary
- What to do next

Please note that these reports are only available to those who have purchased at least the 37 marker yDNA test or the mtDNA Plus test. Roberta is only accepting one order per day because she feels that is the only level she can support with a quality product. Roberta says she anticipates most of the people who purchase this report are either not avid genealogists themselves or are genealogists who don't understand how DNA pertains to their genealogy, especially when you are talking about alleles, STRs, SNPs, haplogroups and haplotypes. Also please note that the administrators of your Phillips DNA Project (Nancy Kiser, Tom Hutchison and Jen Phillips-Smith) are available to answer your questions about DNA analysis and your Phillips genealogy for free, although we can't provide you with a 30 to 50 page report.

## Questions and Answers

**Question:** I subscribe to Dick Eastman's online genealogy newsletter and I noticed he is advertising a new DNA testing company named Familybuilder. They are offering a 17 marker yDNA test for \$59.95, or only \$53.95 if ordered through Eastman's newsletter for a limited time. Is this a good deal?

**Answer:** Certainly the price is right, but there are some significant drawbacks. Unfortunately, Familybuilder does not test the exact same first 12 markers as do most of the other testing companies. This means it is going to be much harder to compare results from Familybuilder with other testing companies. Also, Familybuilder is brand new, so their database is quite small compared to FTDNA's database. Finally, at this point in time, Familybuilder does not offer upgrades, so if you decide you want a more comprehensive DNA test, you will have to start all over again with another company.

**Question:** I've recently heard about 23andme.com as a DNA testing service and then found your Phillips DNA website as well. 23andme is not listed on your comparative chart of DNA testing services. Can you use the results from them? The benefit of their results is the addition of the health information as well as the ancestral information.

**Answer:** 23andme does not test the same yDNA markers (called Short Tandem Repeats or STRs) that FTDNA, Ancestry.com and the other genealogical testing companies do. The main focus of 23andme seems to be medical and very ancient ancestry research, not genealogy. This means we would not be able to tell from your 23andme DNA test which Phillips family is your Phillips family.

**Question:** I got an autosomal DNA test from DNA Tribes. Is it possible to tell which autosomes came from my father and which autosomes came from my mother?

**Answer:** All chromosomes except X and Y come in pairs. These pairs are numbered 1 to 22 and are sometimes called autosomes. You receive one copy from your father and one copy from your mother. As I understand it, scientists cannot differentiate which autosomes go with which parent because of a process called recombination. The yDNA and mtDNA are nonrecombinant, which means they do not combine with any other DNA. This is why scientists know the yDNA comes strictly from the father and the mtDNA comes strictly from the mother. All of the other autosomal DNA inherited from both parents combines indiscriminately in the child, and it is impossible to tell what came from which.

**Question:** Do haplogroups merge?

**Answer:** No, haplogroups do not merge. There are yDNA (paternal) haplogroups and mtDNA (maternal) haplogroups. The reason that yDNA and mtDNA is useful is because they are nonrecombinant. This means neither yDNA nor mtDNA mix or merge with any other DNA and similarly, the yDNA and mtDNA haplogroups also never mix or merge.

Maybe it would make more sense if I used myself as an example, because I have had four lines tested thus far. I got my brother's yDNA tested. It tests E1b1b1, which is a Mediterranean haplogroup, oddly enough, since I know my direct paternal ancestor came from Germany. Then I got my mother's mtDNA tested and she belongs to an mtDNA group called Haplogroup H13, which is an uncommon branch of H found at low frequencies in Europe, the Near East and the Caucasus.

My maternal grandfather's last name was Cox and I got a male Cox cousin's yDNA tested. It tested N, which is a very uncommon yDNA haplogroup mostly found in Finland. Then I got a male Phillips cousin of my maternal grandmother tested, and he belongs to Haplogroup I2b2, which means he is related to those Bronze Age skeletons found in a cave in Germany!

So what does all this mean? It means the lines I have managed to get tested to date are Mediterranean, Finnish, and German. I have not found a drop of Celtic DNA and I was always told by my family that I was half Scots-Irish. Of course, I may yet find a Scots-Irish line that has not been DNA tested thus far.

**Question:** According to Ancestry.com, Obama's great-great-great-grandmother came from Ireland, which supposedly means he is 3.1% Irish. How did they come up with that figure?

**Answer:** The percentage of descendency is estimated by dividing it in half for each generation. Therefore, Obama's DNA from his great-great-great grandmother would be calculated as follows:

Great-great-great grandmother = 100%

Great-great grandmother = 50%

Great grandmother = 25%

Grandmother = 12.5%

Mother = 6.25%

Obama = 3.125%

Of course, if Obama's great-great-great grandfather was also 100% Irish, then Obama would be 6.25% Irish.

## Featured Phillips Family Story

**Who was Moses Phillips?** *By Tim L. Daugherty*

**Part Two** (Part One can be found in the April 2009 Phillips DNA Newsletter)

Having made a good argument that Moses Phillips was in fact Moses Kersawn, the next logical step is to investigate the parentage of Moses Kersawn Phillips. Who were the parents of Moses and what happened to them?

Before moving on to answer the above question, it would be good to note that the surname Kersawn is an actual corruption of the modern surname of Crisson/Cresson. It will be found in the early records as Kersawn, Cursawn, Cosawn, Chrishawn, Cosong, Creason and a host of others. The spelling of the name in early days was left to the ability of the person who could read and write based on how he heard the name pronounced.

Having found the name of Moses Phillips on the funeral home card (Brown Funeral Home, Haywood County, 1932) of Winnie E. Phillips as her father and Adaline Lackey as her mother, we look high and low for a Moses Phillips between 1850 and 1860 who could be found in the records of suitable age to be the father of Winnie. Only one can be identified and it is the Moses Phillips who entered the army of the CSA in 1861 from Yancey County, NC. We further find the marriage record of Moses Phillips and Adaline Lackey in 1854 in Yancey County, NC. There is no Moses Phillips on the 1850 or 1860 census records; however, as previously stated, there is a Moses Kersawn on both the 1850 and 1860 census records.

Let's look at the possible parentage of Moses Phillips Kersawn. In her petition for the estate of her brother, Matilda Roland states that Zilpah, Lace (Lazarus) and Penland (Nathan) Phillips are the next of kin for Moses. No mention is made of a wife or children for Moses. The 1850 Yancey County, NC, census lists this particular family as follows:

*William Phillips, age 50, farmer, born in NC*  
*Zelpha, age 40, born in NC*  
*Matilda C, age 13, born in NC*  
*Lazarus, age 07, born in NC*

Zilpah may have been pregnant with Nathan Penland Phillips on the 1850 census because he was born around 1851. I believe two more children are living in other households on the 1850 census namely, Moses and Susannah. Moses using the surname of Cursawn is living with Mr. and Mrs. Henry Roland, Jr. not far from William and Zilpah Phillips and is listed as 17 years old and Susannah Phillips is living in the family of Mr. and Mrs. John Bailey and is 15 years old. A piece of information to note: on the 1850 census, Wade (Waid) Hampton is a neighbor to William Phillips. This is important to remember for the 1840 census. The 1840 census for Yancey County only lists the heads of household and all other family members are only enumerated by sex and age. On the 1840 census, Wade Hampton is listed as a neighbor to an H. W. Phillips. If these are the same Wade Hampton and William Phillips of the 1850 census, then William Phillips is H. William Phillips and he has six sons and two daughters. Here is the information from the 1840 census for H. W. Phillips:

#### *Males*

*To 5 – two*  
*5 to 10 – two (Moses Phillips/Kersawn?)*  
*10 to 15 – one*  
*15 to 20 – one*  
*30 to 40 – one (H. W. Phillips?)*

#### *Females*

*To 5 – one (Susannah Phillips?)*  
*5 to 10 – one (Matilda Catherine Kersawn/Phillips?)*  
*30 to 40 – one (Zilpah Phillips?)*

There is no H. W. Phillips on the 1850 census for Yancey County, NC. On July 26, 1861, four Phillips men joined the CSA Army. They were John D. Phillips age 22, Lazarus Phillips age 18, Moses Phillips age 28 and Willis Phillips age 33, all from Yancey County. These Phillips men are probably all related.

H. William Phillips dies before the 1860 Census and Zilpah Phillips (age 52) is listed with the following:

*Lace P. Phillips, age 16, (Lazarus)*  
*Nathan P. Phillips, age 9*

## **The Kersawn/Cursawn Family**

What about the name Cursawn/Kersawn? Is there a family by that name in Yancey County during this same time period? Yes.

The 1850 census for Yancey County lists the following Cursawn family.

*Levi Cursawn, age 30*

*Merrit S. Cursawn, age 15 (Middle initial is difficult to read; may be L or P also)*

*Jacob W. Cursawn, age 01*

*Anna Cursawn, age 27*

*Elizabeth F. Cursawn, age 05*

*Mary A. Cursawn, age 03*

Levi's age is suspect on this census, because 10 years later in 1860 he gives his age as 46. There is no doubt that the younger children on this census are the children of Anna. The male, Merrit is too old to be her son as she would have been 12 years old when he was born, unless of course, like Levi, her age is not correct. Levi is probably about 35 to 40 years old in 1850. Cursawn is a very unusual name and is not very common at this time. There is one other Cursawn family in Yancey County on the 1850 census.

*John Cursawn, age 27*

*Alfred P. Cursawn, age 3/12 (Middle initial is difficult to read; may be T or L also)*

*Marinda Cursawn, age 24 (Her name is difficult to read; it could be Morinda)*

*Nancy E. Cursawn, age 06*

*Uri A. Cursawn, age 03 (This name is difficult to read also)*

*Elizabeth Cursawn, age 02*

Given the close proximity of these two families on the census record, Levi and John Cursawn are probably brothers or some other close relative. These two families comprise the entire Cursawn/Kersawn families on the 1850 census for Yancey County, North Carolina.

## **Merrit Cursawn Snipe**

Merrit Cursawn was born about 1835 in North Carolina. On the 1860 census he has moved to McDowell County, NC and is going by the name of Merrit Snipe.

1860 census for McDowell County, NC

*Merrit Snipe, age 26*

*Mary Snipe, age 24*

*Rutha Snipe, age 03*

*Unnamed infant, age 10/12*



Merrit has married a woman named Mary. Who was she? There is no marriage record for a Merrit Cursawn or Merrit Snipe in Yancey County. There is a marriage record for a Merrit Penland to a Mary J. Oakes in Yancey County, NC, on August 25, 1856. There is no Merrit Penland on the 1850 census for Yancey County or on the 1860 census for Yancey County. It is possible that Merrit is using the name Merrit Penland in 1856.

Let us back up to the 1840 census where we look for a Penland who could be the father of a Merrit Penland in Yancey County. On page 9 of that census, there is only one Penland family listed, an M. L. Penland age 20 to 30 and his wife age 20 to 30, no children are listed. What is interesting is that this M. L. Penland is in the same area as H. W. Phillips. There is no M. L. Penland on the 1850 or 1860 census for Yancey County, NC.

Looking again at the 1850 and 1860 census for Levi Kersawn, we see that in 1850 he was married to Anna age 27. In 1860 he is married to Hannah M. age 29. If we accept Merrit's age in 1850 as 15, then Anna would be too young to be his mother (assuming Anna's age was really 27). There are no Cursawn/Kersawn/Cosawn/etc. families in Yancey County in 1840 according to the census records.

In researching these families and their descendants in and around Yancey County, I have seen many cases where children would use more than one surname at various times. They may use one name on the census and another one on a marriage record and then another one on some other document. However, I have also noticed that whatever surname they use, it is either one of several persons; their father's actual surname, their mother's maiden name or the surname of a grandparent. It can be very confusing for a researcher.

Here we can create an interesting scenario based on the records. I think Levi Cursawn fathered these children:

Moses Cursawn Phillips born about 1833  
Susannah Phillips born about 1835 (no further information of her)  
Merrit Cursawn Penland Snipe born about 1835  
Matilda Cursawn Roland born about 1837

Levi fathered Moses, Susannah and Matilda by Zilpah Phillips and Levi fathered Merrit possibly by a female Penland.

### **Who Are the Parents of Moses Phillips?**

Back to our original question, who are the parents of Moses Phillips? Well, I believe we can say beyond doubt that Zilpah Phillips is his mother. By process of elimination, I believe we can say with some certainty that Levi Cursawn is his father. However, I am not completely willing to rule out the possibility that Zilpah was a Cursawn when she had Moses, perhaps out of wedlock.

What about H. William Phillips? If Mr. Phillips is the father of Moses, we have to ask why Moses used the surname Cursawn on two census records and why his sister Matilda used the name

Cosong when she married Silas Roland. Again we are faced with more questions than answers. It may even be possible that Cursawn is the surname of one of the grandparents and Moses and Matilda chose to use it for some reason unknown to us.

I will state my final position on the matter pending further research. I believe that Zilpah Phillips, either before she married H. William Phillips or after they were married, had three children by Levi Cursawn, Moses, Susannah and Matilda.

## Speaking Up

### **Time to get a Wiggle On** *By Allen Phillips (Phillips Family Group 18)*

When I was young and slow getting to my chores, either my father or mother would tell me to “get a wiggle on.”

There’s a group of Phillips who live only a hundred or so miles from me. I’ve spoken to them quite a few years ago. As a result of phone calls and paper records we have sent to each other, I’m pretty confident that during the middle 1700s, two brothers went their separate ways and came to different parts of Maine. Thus we are connected. I think. Doubts, however, creep in because the relationship has not been clearly documented. Nor have we been in touch since that spurt of contact.

From time to time, I’ve thought I ought to contact them, go there to visit one day, find a male descendant, and convince him to do a DNA test. In the back of my mind was the thought that I could get there anytime -- later. So it wasn’t a priority “today.” Now I hope there’s a male descendant still surviving and it is a priority for me. Today.

Likely it doesn’t need saying; however, this may apply to others in our DNA project.

I need to get a wiggle on.