



©2011 The Phillips DNA Project

Phillips DNA News

www.phillipsdnaproject.com

May-June 2014

Volume 6 Issue 3

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

I would like to thank everyone who took the time to fill out the survey we submitted to the membership during the first week of April. About 20% of our membership took the survey, which was surprising and gratifying.

An interesting and rewarding observation from this survey is over 90% of the people who responded say they read the newsletter usually or always. Since that is the case, we will make an effort to continue publishing the newsletter on a regular basis, even though it is a tremendous amount of work for a volunteer organization. You, dear reader, can help us in this effort by supplying articles to be published in the newsletter.

Another interesting observation is that the majority of the people who responded to our survey say they do not belong to a genealogical society or a lineage society. This may indicate that people who are attracted to genetic genealogy are not your traditional genealogical researchers.

A very significant revelation from this survey is around 40% of the respondents say they do not keep the Phillips DNA Project's administration informed when they identify a new "earliest known ancestor." If this is true of 40% of our entire membership, it means our lineage pages are very out-of-date.

Here are the goals of our Phillips DNA Project:

1. Help researchers from common or related branches of Phillips families work together to find their shared heritage.
2. Identify how the participants' families are connected, both genetically and through paper trails.
3. Identify and confirm genetic lineages of ancestral families and find our ancestral roots in Europe, or wherever they may be.
4. Ultimately catalog pedigrees and genetic connections of all known Phillips branches.

If our members do not tell us when they identify a new "earliest known ancestor," we cannot achieve any of our goals. Please let us know when you are able to trace your Phillips line further back so that we can keep the lineage pages updated.

Here are the results of the survey in detail, in case you are interested:

I joined the Phillips DNA Project primarily to:	Responses:
Find “lost cousins”	18
Get past a “brick wall” wall in my genealogy	55
Just out of curiosity	6
Get a discount on my Y-DNA test	0
A family member recruited me	5
Prove or disprove a familial connection	14
Identify my ancestral or ethnic roots	37
Other	5

I am a member of a genealogical society:

Yes	53
No	87

I am a member of a lineage society:

Yes	21
No	119

Since joining the Phillips DNA Project:

I have attained my objectives	5
I am still working on my objectives	103
I attained my objectives yet continue to trace my roots	26
I am no longer working on tracing my roots	0
I have not found what I am looking for and am discouraged	6

Since joining the Phillips DNA Project, I have attempted to help other as we try to find our common ancestor:

Yes	108
No	11
I have no idea how to help, DNA is confusing	21

How important is it to you that your family tree is accurately researched (1 equals not important, 5 equals very important):

5	111
4	19
3	8
4	1
1	0

I visit the Phillips DNA Project website:

Daily	5
Weekly	13
Monthly	57
Occasionally	65

I read the Phillips DNA Project newsletter:

Always and as soon as it is published	76
Usually and when I have the time	54
Seldom and only if it contains information I know will be helpful to me	7
Almost never	3

I keep the Phillips DNA Project administrators informed when I identify a new “earliest known ancestor”:

Yes	85
No	55

I or a Phillips relative has submitted samples for:

Y-DNA test	107
Mt-DNA test	4
Autosomal DNA test	4
All of the above	9
None of the above	16

Price is the most important consideration to me when choosing a DNA test:

Yes	55
No	85

Guest Column

Journey into the Past

Bob Phillips, U.E., B.A., M.Div./Group 11

According to an ABC News article dated October 24, 2012, genealogy is “hot.” The same article states that genealogy is second only to gardening in popularity as America’s favorite pastime. Over a billion dollars a year is being spent on genealogy, with the popular internet portal of Ancestry.com, alone. Since you are reading this, I assume that you too are interested in your family roots, and perhaps have actively been searching. Also, since you are reading this in our Phillips DNA Project Newsletter, I am going to assume that you have Phillips roots. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Phillips is the 49th most common surname in the U.S. There were almost 352,000 Phillipses in the U.S. in 2000.

The personal computer and the internet have a lot to do with the growth of popularity in genealogy. Many records and lineages are now instantly accessible via the internet. If one knows the names of their grandparents, has even a vague idea of where and when they may have been born, all one has to do is to plug that information into their computer, and viola! Right?

Well, it’s not really that easy. Common given names, within broad geographical regions, can produce multiple results, and sometimes within a city or county. Rootsweb’s World Connect database is full of lineages, mostly unsourced, and copied from I do not know where. Many of them are full of errors.

Back in 1967 when I first started to attempt to find my Phillips roots, I spent long hours during the summers at the Burton Historical Collection in the Main Branch of the Detroit Public Library. I also wrote letters of inquiry to historical societies, court houses, relatives and other places, attempting to learn what I could. Eventually I came in touch with a descendant of another Phillips who had roots in southeastern Ontario. I was very tempted to believe that our families might be related. That Phillips family had moved to Canada following the American Revolution as they had remained loyal to Britain and fought on the side of the King.

In 2006, I submitted a Y-DNA test for 12 markers to Family Tree DNA and in 2007 I joined the Phillips DNA Project and upgraded my test to 37 markers. With the results of the Y-DNA test, I found myself in Group 11. I was very surprised to discover that I had genetic cousins out there,

some who had traced their lineage back to the 1600's in Rhode Island, and others who like me had hit a brick wall. But, I also discovered that I was not related to the other Phillips family who settled in Canada following the American Revolution. I was in Group 11 and they were found in Group 19. Conclusion: just because there are two Phillips families in the same area does not make them related. Now the hope is that working with those whom I do share Y-DNA, my cousins, we might be able to find our missing links.

Although the world has shrunk with the growth of the internet, personal computers, the increase of documents and lineages on the internet, it does not mean we can now put aside the hard work of critical thinking. We still need to make notes of our sources, weigh the evidence, and reason out our conclusions. Only a Y-DNA test will identify our paternal cousins. Once discovered, we need to share the information that we have, including our sources, with those cousins so that they can verify conclusions have been reasonably arrived at. Also, since our cousins descend from a different branch, somewhere back when in the family tree, making note of siblings of our ancestors will prove helpful to others.

If you are interested in tracing other branches than your direct paternal line, the best way to do that, in addition to traditional genealogical methods, is to identify a living male descendant of that family and encourage them to have a 37 marker Y-DNA test, perhaps suggesting that you will pay for it. There are no shortcuts. You can't get a baked potato from a box of instant mashed potatoes.

For those of you who are curious about the initials following my name, "U.E." means that I am a proven descendant of a United Empire Loyalist, one who fought for the Crown during the American Revolution. That particular ancestor however was not a Phillips, but rather a Leach. Yes, I have a B.A., in history from Wayne State University in Detroit. And, yes, a Master of Divinity from The Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Yet, like most of you, I am still plodding along, trying the best I can, to uncover the path my ancestors walked.

May your journey bring you joy in each new discovery that you make.

[Featured Phillips Family Story](#)

Three Frustrated Generations

By Susan Mohr, Phillips Family DNA Group 58

For all of my adult life I have known that my great-great grandfather was "Edward Phillips of Kentucky," nothing more. No less than three generations of my family have searched for Edward with no results.

My great grandfather Franklin Thomas Phillips was born to teenage lovers Mary Jane McDonald and Edward Phillips, natives of Mason County, Kentucky. Whether they were ever legally married is debated. Family notes and oral history state that Mary Jane's family drove Edward away either before or just after the child was born, as they "did not approve of the match." Oral history further contends that Mary Jane was disowned by her family, and that her story was known, but not discussed. Fortunately, Mary Jane and her son kept the name Edward Phillips alive in our family history.

One of many whom we thought could be "our" Edward Phillips was a man by that name, of appropriate age and born in Kentucky, who lived and died in Missouri just thirty-five miles away from where Mary Jane raised her son. Through a second cousin I discovered that this Edward Phillips' family had submitted DNA to the Phillips DNA Project, and he put me in touch with the daughter of the man who had submitted his DNA, Elizabeth Phillips. She also felt that we were very likely related. It took only minutes to decide to submit a DNA sample in order to attempt to prove the relationship, and to disprove others. Elizabeth in turn put me in contact with Nancy Kiser who manages the project, and she was very helpful in advising me as to how DNA works and which test would likely locate a match to my paternal line. I contacted my male first cousin, since the DNA needed to be from a male, and he and I decided immediately to take the leap. For several months we waited anxiously for the test results to come in.

Much to everyone's surprise, and quite disappointingly, the test proved that we didn't share an ancestor with the Edward Phillips in the next county for at least a thousand years. That was a good lesson in assumption, which accounts for a good deal of fiction that is presented as factual research.

As luck would have it, we did have an exact DNA match at 37 markers, a gentleman in Texas who had taken the test five years ago. Ms. Kiser didn't know if he was still around or not, or whether he would be willing to talk with me, but she provided me with some skeletal information that our match had submitted to her. With great hope, I emailed our match and also sent him a letter by mail. It is impossible to describe how hard my heart was pounding when I found an answer from him in my email inbox a few days later. I jumped out of my chair, yelled at my husband that I had heard back, returned to my office, and opened the message with shaking hands. Our match elaborated upon what Nancy Kiser had found in the information that he had submitted, that he had an ancestor four generations back who had a younger brother named Edward, born in Mason County, Kentucky, very close to Mary Jane's age. Bingo! There he was.

Our new-discovered distant cousin had the names of Edward's three wives, but two of those included no surname. Searching through the wives' names and various census records, we were able to piece together Edward's life, not in Missouri or in Kentucky as expected, but in Indiana and Illinois. We would never have thought to look for Edward in those states, and with a name as common as his, we would never have known which of hundreds of Edwards, in any state, was ours. There is no question that we would never have found our great-great grandfather without the help of DNA testing.

We have subsequently found a very elderly lady in Indiana, a genealogist still of very sharp mind, who was married to Edward's great grandson. She has confirmed the information given to us through the project, and has also been able to fill in many blanks about him. Just as our research was beginning to show, Edward was, to put it graciously, a colorful character. Her description was that he was "a scoundrel," married at least three times after his relationship with Mary Jane McDonald; twice to widows, and involved in a lawsuit over a child sired with another man's wife and a battle over that gentleman's estate. Despite his character flaws, of which there seem to have been many, we are thrilled to have found "our" Edward at last. Still, much research remains to be done, but if what this lady tells us is true, the work will prove most entertaining. Perhaps even more distant cousins will be found as research progresses.

It occurs to me how lucky we are to be able to utilize this incredible new genealogical tool. It is surely the wave of the future, and with DNA testing available to those of us in the private sector, the impossible is finally possible. Without it, I wonder how many generations beyond ours would have met with frustration trying to locate this very elusive ancestor.

Genealogical Privacy

By Richard W. Eastman

The following article was published in Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter and is copyrighted 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>.

Warning: this article contains personal opinions.

I often hear or read comments similar to this:

Person #1: "I won't put my genealogy information online because I am afraid someone might steal it."

Person #2: "Where did you obtain all that information?"

Person #1: "From freely available public records, including census records, birth and death records, newspapers, and such."

Here is another variation of the same thing:

"I sent my genealogy information to person X, and now it is published all over the Internet! How can I stop that?"

Many genealogists think the information they collect becomes private for some reason and that no one else has a right to view the info. They collect information about names, dates, and

places throughout history and then seem to believe that they “own” the information, even though they obtained all that from publicly-available sources. I believe they are wrong, both for legal and for practical reasons.

You may refer to the information you collect as “my ancestry” or “my records” but that doesn't mean that you own the information. It does not belong to you. In fact, most such information in the U.S. and Canada is freely available to everyone in the public domain. Nobody can claim that data as their own.

In the U.S., copyright laws clearly state that facts cannot be copyrighted and do not belong to any one person. Facts belong to everyone. Such facts include the names of individuals and information about the events in their lives: dates and places of birth, marriage, death, enlistment, education, and more.

Yes, lawyers can argue about the finer points of law, such as exceptions for any new analysis that you create. Another argument is the compilation of a group of facts arguably is subject to copyright. There may be merit to these arguments but those arguments never change the basics: names, places, and dates in the U.S. are always public domain and typically are already available elsewhere to anyone who cares to take the time to look. Since genealogy information is already freely available elsewhere in the public domain, I see no reason to try to hide that information. Doing so is a waste of your time. You cannot hide something that is already freely available elsewhere. You certainly can never claim ownership of names, dates, or places.

Most genealogists are willing to help others and to share data. You may share your data with one other person. He or she may share that data with another person. Some, motivated by the most charitable of intentions, will share all the data they have ever received with everyone else by publishing it on the Internet. Such a willingness to share is rooted deep in human nature.

Some people may share inaccurate claims. I can point to a few online claims about my ancestors that are easily proven to be fairy tales. However, that won't stop me from sharing information that I believe to be correct. In fact, reading bogus information online is a great incentive for me to publish my own findings and to prove to future readers that my interpretation of the facts is more believable than the claims of someone else. I WANT others to read my interpretations of the facts.

If you are concerned about the accuracy of genealogical information posted online, you certainly will not improve the problem by hiding the truth!

The complaints against putting information on the Internet are the same as those expressed 50 years ago by people who found personal family information in published books and magazine articles. The basic “problem” hasn't changed, but the speed and ease of disseminating information have improved.

I will suggest that publishing opposing interpretations of genealogy information will improve the reliability of genealogy information. In effect, we are all pleading our cases in a public "courtroom." We all get to present our cases by telling what we believe is the truth and then by backing up those arguments with source citations. Future readers become the "judge and jury" by reading both sides of the arguments and then deciding for themselves which claims are the more believable. I see this public presentation of opposing views as a good thing.

Some people are paranoid about "identity theft." Indeed, identity theft is real and is a big problem. We all should think about identity theft and similar issues before entering anything online. I am still waiting for someone to explain to me how a listing of great-grandfather's World War I draft record can be used to commit identity theft.

I am also amused that some of the people who are paranoid about identity theft based upon genealogy data continue to use Facebook daily to post private information about themselves online!

I won't publish private information on Facebook or on any other social networking site. I won't publish names or other information about living individuals for several reasons, but I have freely published information online about my deceased ancestors and I plan to continue doing so. Common sense tells all of us that the potential identity thief is not the boogeyman some paranoid people think he might be.

Posting genealogy information online can be a great help to distant cousins you have never met. Of course, you also need to include source citations telling where you found the information. If you found the information in a certain census record, say so. (That also proves that you do not own the information.)

A Good Samaritan always tries to help others. That's true in genealogy as well as elsewhere. What are you trying to hide? Share your findings!

If you have knowledge of something that you do not want made public, don't tell anyone! This applies to genealogical information and to anything else you wish to keep secret. In today's instant access world, never put any private information into any electronic format, not even e-mail. The minute the information is passed electronically, for all practical purposes, it is now public information, whether you intended that or not.

The recipient of email information is very likely to pass that information to others who have an interest, and each of those people is likely to repeat the process. With the popularity of the Internet, it is almost certain that, within about three or four "generations" of communication, someone will publicly post that information, having no clue that you intended it to be a secret when you divulged it to your original recipient.

Copyrights or no copyrights, any information you give to someone else probably will make its way to a database on the Web sooner or later. Let the sender beware.

The concept of "protecting my genealogy information" strikes me as laughable. If anyone wants to learn about my ancestry, or yours, they can do so in the same manner that I did: one record at a time. In fact, I hope they do so and, if they find anything I overlooked, I hope they tell me!

Information about one's ancestry has always been freely available everywhere in books, microfilms, old records in various archives, and sometimes online. "Protecting" that information from others strikes me as a waste of time.