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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

Hello, everyone, and welcome to the October issue of our newsletter. Happy Columbus Day (USA), Thanksgiving (Canada), and Halloween (everywhere)!

The quickest way to make progress in genealogical research is to connect with someone who may be further along or more experienced than you are, and perhaps the easiest way to make this connection is through an online mail list or message board.

There seems to be a lot of confusion about the differences between message boards and mailing lists, so we thought it might be helpful to describe the attributes of both. RootsWeb (<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/>) is one of several genealogical websites that host free message boards and mailing lists. Here are definitions of each from the RootsWeb site:

A mailing list is simply an e-mail party line: every message that a participant sends to the list is distributed to all other list subscribers. Subscribing to a mailing list is one of the best ways of connecting to people who share your interests.

A message board is a computerized version of the old-fashioned bulletin board. By posting a message to the appropriate message board, you create a public record through which other researchers can find you.

If you want a truly customized “discussion group”, you can start your own for free at a number of different internet service providers, including MSN, Yahoo and Google. You can also set up your own mail list or message board at RootsWeb for free.

Last month, Phillips Family Group 11 decided to set up a Yahoo group for their Phillips family, and I think everyone in Group 11 would agree it has been very successful so far. The Group 11 Yahoo site functions primarily as a mail list, but it also has the ability to store files and archive information.

A discussion group combines the best features of a message board and a mail list. Think of it this way. Sometimes a frenzy of information will be exchanged via private emails between members of a family. The information may consist of new discoveries, directions on research, certain allied family names and/or all the possibilities sprinkled with the best educated guesses.

Unfortunately, all that information and brainstorming are locked inside each and everyone's computer who participated in the exchange of ideas and it is not available for anyone else to see. A week, a month or perhaps even years from now, all of those emails and information could be lost forever as we upgrade computers or delete the information to free up space. Discussion groups can be set up online so that the clues and information will never be lost and they can be viewed and searched by the general public.

If you are interested in setting up a discussion group for your Phillips family, please let us know and we would be happy to help you get started. It is not difficult to do - all you need is the motivation. We think this could be an excellent way to advance the research of every single Phillips family line.

Finally, our co-administrator Tom Hutchison would like to thank all the AOL email-using members on the Phillips DNA Project's email list for their feedback with regard to last month's mailing snafu; it seems the problem is resolved. He also wants to remind everyone to please let us know if you change your email address so that we can update the mail list.

Genetic Genealogy Seminar

By Earl C. Beaty, ISOGG Regional Coordinator for the State of Colorado



On July 31, 2010, an all day seminar on Genetic Genealogy was held at the Denver Public Library (DPL). A co-sponsor was the International Society of Genetic Genealogy (ISOGG). Attendance was remarkably high. Originally we reserved the Gates Room with a seating capacity of 55, but early on we had an indication that the attendance might be high and moved to a room on the 7th floor with a seating capacity of 99. Also, we set up a reservation system and in the end we had to turn away several applicants. ISOGG is a purely volunteer organization, DPL is publicly supported, and in that vein there was no charge for attendance. That implied that our speakers could not be paid, but we were able to arrange an unusually talented group.

The program was arranged in four nominally one-hour sessions. A rather long lunch break permitted participants to meet individually with the speakers for personal consultation. Out-of-town speakers were Dr. James Freed of Ohio, Kirsten Saxe of Maryland and Nancy Kiser of Colorado. I took one of the sessions, and Jim Bullock and Larry Bryant were available for the noontime consultation session.

Jim Freed started us off with a review of the genetic basics, the testing procedures and some examples of how genetic testing can be used to solve genealogy problems. It is not necessary to know much about genetics to be able to use this testing for genealogical research. Special and sometimes difficult situations come up and for those it is possible to consult experts. The genetic genealogy community does have experts who are very helpful. Genetic testing, by itself, doesn't get very far with working out a person's ancestry. Information from other sources is necessary to combine with the genetic clues. There is no general formula for combining clues from different sources. As with the rest of genealogy, it is a matter of discovering a solution to a puzzle.

Kirsten prepared for the handout a long list of points that needed to be covered. There was not nearly enough time available to go through them all. There are three testing types being used to help determine ancestry: Y-chromosome, mitochondrial, and autosomes. Only men have Y-chromosomes but these tests are especially interesting for genealogical purposes because the naming system used in many west European cultures makes the surname and Y-chromosome travel together. Two kinds of Y-chromosome tests are actively used. They are identified by the acronyms STR and SNP. The STR tests are the genealogical workhorse because the mutation rate is about right. SNP tests are mainly used for learning about long range ancestry, but some active technical research is bringing the range down. Some of the SNP data are now having a direct impact on genealogy, and the field is changing rapidly. Mitochondrial DNA is outside the cell nucleus, and is passed along the female line, making it interesting for a different branch of our ancestry. The low mutation rate makes this form of testing difficult to use for short range ancestry. Autosomes are the nuclear chromosomes other than the sex chromosomes, X and Y. Some new technology permits testing a very large number of loci, and software has been developed to use the results to learn something about ancestry. Because every child gets some of its autosomal DNA from mom and some from dad, after several generations, ancestry becomes very difficult to deduce. Databases are being built to facilitate this kind of research.

The usual discussions of how to use this genetic information tends to concentrate on comparing the data from two persons to get some clues about their relatedness. In the third session, I tried to explain how it is possible to get more information by considering groups. The most important groups for genealogical purposes are surname groups. Men looking for relatives should first look at others with the same surname. Another advantage of the surname group is that a genealogical interest is shared, but a diversity of skills is possible. Thus, it is not necessary for all participants to be expert at all parts of the work. Another grouping that is rapidly becoming more important is haplogroups. Haplogroups are determined by SNP tests, and the useful rule is that men in different haplogroups can be considered unrelated for

genealogical purposes. This can be very useful in dividing a surname group into unrelated branches.

Nancy Kiser presented some useful URLs and a small dictionary as part of the handout. Also, she led a Q&A session as the last of the day. A panel was lined up to answer questions from the floor. It was an active and interesting discussion.

A question we have been seeking to answer is whether this kind of communication is needed. Almost all communication in genetic genealogy makes use of the Internet. Participants are widely scattered and have a broad range of family issues. Is there a significant need for people to get together in a way to permit a personal exchange? The response here suggests that there is such a need.

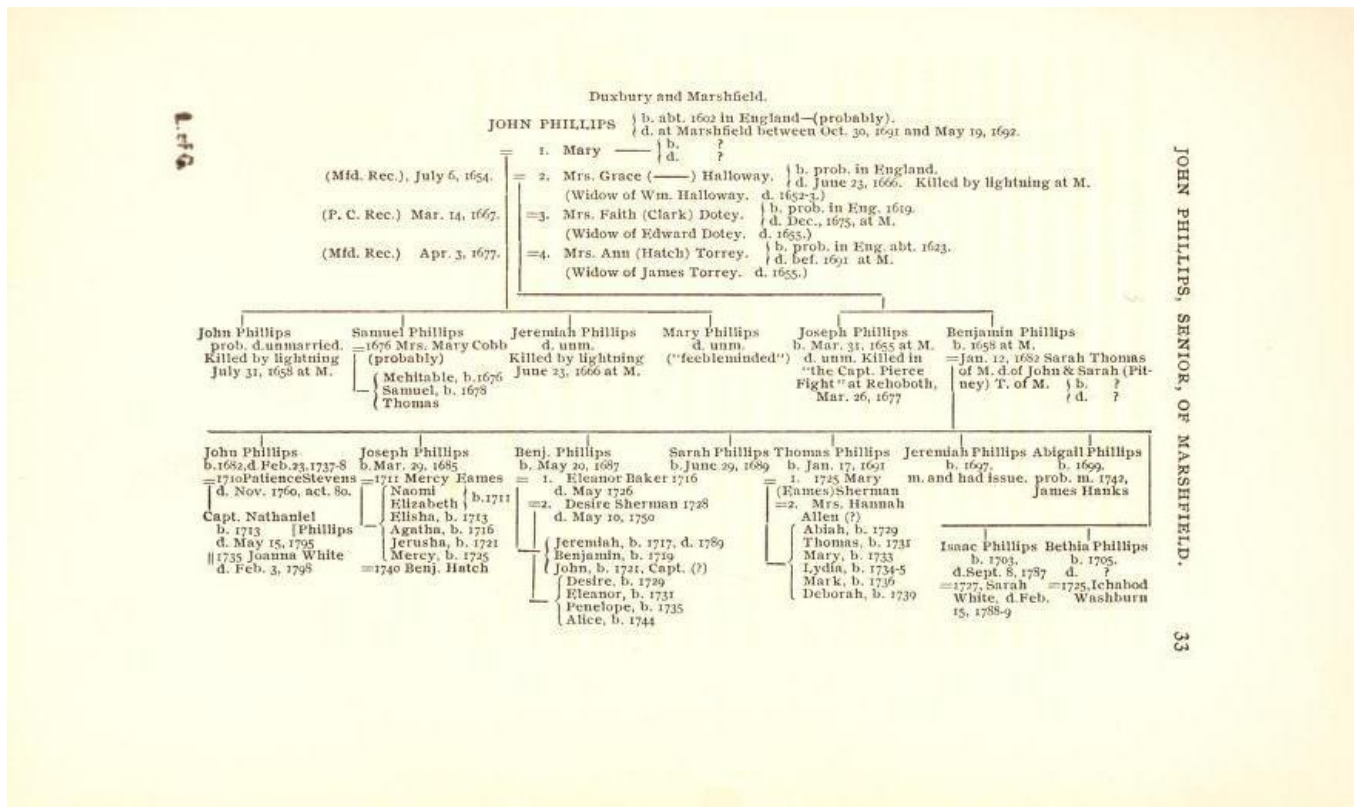
Thanks to James, Kirsten and Nancy for making this meeting possible. Sandy Carter-Duff did a marvelous job as Registrar, Lynette Dick arranged refreshments, and Duane Duff took care of the electronic equipment. Janice Prater was very helpful with arranging the meeting room and other facilities. And thanks to several other members of CIG who helped with the registration.

Featured Story

THE FAMILY AND VICISSITUDES OF JOHN PHILLIPS, SENIOR, OF DUXBURY AND MARSHFIELD

By Azel Ames, M.D.

(The following are excerpts from a book written in 1903 by Azel Ames. The end notes have been modified to match the excerpts. A member of Phillips Family Group 36 claims descent from John Phillips of Duxbury and Marshfield. The entire book can be found online at this link: <http://www.archive.org/stream/familyvicissitud00ames#page/n0/mode/2up>.)



It appears well-nigh certain that the JOHN PHILLIPS who was of Duxbury and Marshfield in the colony of New Plimouth between 1640 and 1690, came to Duxbury in 1639¹, presumably from the Massachusetts Bay colony, having "bought of Robert Mendall of Duxburrow a house and land for 6 in hand and XVIIteene pounds" to be paid in installments "at the house of Mr. Winthrop in Boston."² He was quite certainly the John Phillips whom Deane says,³ "settled early in Duxbury" and "had several children, born probably in England."

He is not to be confounded, it would appear, with the John Phillips whom Governor Bradford states,⁴ "came to Plymouth as a servant, seeking service and a change of masters," in 1630 and about whom some sharp correspondence between the Bay Puritans and the Plymouth Pilgrims occurred. From the statement of his will⁵, Mr. Phillips doubtless was born about 1602 and would have been in 1630 about twenty-eight years old and beyond the usual age of servants still having time to serve.

No mention of his first marriage, or of the births of children by his first wife, appears on Plymouth Colony Records; hence the inference that he was married⁶ and had children before coming to the colony, which inference is further warranted by the fact that his son John (killed by lightning in 1658)⁷ must then have been, by what is known of him, about twenty-five years of age. The facts, too, of Mr. Phillips' purchase of a house and land at Duxbury in 1639, and of the immediate grants to him by the colony, of considerable land adjacent to his purchase, would seem to indicate a man of some means and already "of family."

In 1658 (July 31), Mr. John Phillips, Junior, who had seemingly become a householder or sojourner at South Marshfield - a different part of the town from that where his father lived - was killed by lightning in "his dwelling, as has been indicated." This event, tragic and notable enough in itself, is said to have been the earliest known death by lightning in the New England colonies, and was very widely noticed⁸ and recorded⁹, as had been shown, but only the account of Capt. Nathaniel Thomas, a leading citizen of Marshfield¹⁰ and long a distinguished official of the Colony,¹¹ who chanced to be an eye witness, is quoted here, being alike direct and comprehensive.

*"In the month of August (error, as noted) in the year of 1658, there was in the Towne of Marshfield, a terrible storm of Thunder Lightning & raine, and as I was going homeward being about a mile from home I met with one John Phillips & another man coming out of a meadow from making hay to the next house for shelter from the storm, who advised me to goe in with them to the house least I should be overtaken in the storm ere I should get home the storm then coming up exceedingly black and Terrible. I accordingly went in with them, & the sd Phillips sat downe on a stoole with his face toward the Iner door & his back to the hearth & his side closs to the Jam of the chimney. I sat down with my face directly toward him about six foot from him, the Thunder came quickly up over the house The Clouds flying exceedingly Low and thick soe that the heavens were much darkened. Then in a moment came downe (as it were) a great ball of fire with a Terrible crack of Thunder & fell Just before where the sd Phillips sat, my eye then happening to be on him saw him once start on the stole he sat on & fell from thence dead on the hearth backward without any motion of life . . . I doe not remember there was any outward appearance of hurt upon the body of the sd Phillips, a young child being at that moment about three foot from sd Phillips had noe harm."*¹²

The keen and widespread interest in the event recited and thereby in the family of John Phillips, Senior, was, of course, greatly heightened by the still more remarkable and impressive disaster which again befell this family on June 23, 1666¹³, just eight years later, when the dwelling of Mr. Phillips situate in the eastern part of the town of Marshfield¹⁴ was struck by lightning and fourteen persons therein were prostrated and overcome, three of whom were instantly killed.

The latter were Mr. Phillips' second wife, Mrs. Grace Phillips; his third son by his first wife, Jeremiah Phillips, a young man of twenty years; and Mr. William Shurtleff, a near neighbor, who with his family (his own house having been recently burned), were just then guests of Mr. Phillips. The house dog was also killed, while the six children and young people who were all about him, escaped unharmed.

At the time of the first of these disasters by lightning, Mr. John Phillips, Senior, had been married to his second wife, Grace Holloway, four years, and her first son by him, Joseph Phillips, was about three years old, while the second son, Benjamin, was born that year. The mistake has been made by several writers of naming Grace Holloway as the wife of John Phillips, Jr., and Joseph and Benjamin as his sons by her, whereas they were his father's sons and his half-brothers. Such a view is wholly untenable and without warrant.

That the elder John Phillips married Grace Halloway, that her two daughters went to live with him and he took charge of their property, and that Joseph and Benjamin were his sons by Grace Halloway, his second wife, (the latter of them being named as such in his will), there is ample and positive, official, record-proof. Their mother, Grace, incontestably lived with him as his wife, from 1654 to her death in 1666.

In the latter year when the second visitation of death came to the Phillips family¹⁵, killing instantly, as noted, two of its members, (Mrs. Phillips and her step-son Jeremiah), Mrs. Phillips' two daughters by her former husband (Halloway) were evidently living with her¹⁶, well-grown girls, Grace the elder, her mother's namesake, marrying Josiah Reade, the November following her mother's death.¹⁷ Hannah (or Jane), the other, but little younger, seems to have continued, for a time, at least, in her step-father's family. It does not appear when or where she died, or that she ever married.

Samuel Phillips, the second son by Mr. Phillips' first wife¹⁸; Jeremiah, his third son¹⁹ and his daughter Mary²⁰ were all undoubtedly still members of the Phillips family at the time of the disaster, while four of the Shurtleff family - Mr. and Mrs. Shurtleff and their two boys²¹ - with Mr. Timothy Rogers²², were guests of the Phillipses.

The fourteen persons present and prostrated at the time of the lightning stroke, June 23, 1666, were hence apparently: Mr. John Phillips, Mrs. Grace Phillips, Samuel, Jeremiah and Mary Phillips, children of Mr. Phillips by his first wife; Joseph and Benjamin Phillips, his sons by the second wife; Hannah and Grace Halloway, Mrs. Grace Phillips' daughters by her former husband; Mr. William Shurtleff and his wife; their two sons, William and Thomas Shurtleff; and Mr. Timothy Rogers.

All the victims of the disaster were doubtless buried from this shattered homestead the day following, viz: June 24, 1666, as shown by the early records of the town.²³ Their graves have not been certainly located.

END NOTES:

1. *Plym. Col. Deeds. Prince Chronology, Vol. II, p. 4. Winsor's Hist. of Duxbury, p. 282. Goodwin's Pilgrim Republic, p. 355.*
2. *Idem.*
3. *Deane's Hist. of Scituate, p. 322. Phillips never lived at Scituate, though given mention by Deane as if he did.*
4. *Governor Bradford's Letter Book. Goodwin's Pilgrim Republic, p. 354. Drake's Hist. of Boston, p. 132.*
5. *Plym. Col. Wills, closed series, Vol. I, p. 140. Genealog. Advertiser, Vol. 3, p. 28.*
6. *Winsor's Hist. of Duxbury, p. 291, says: "Married in England."*
7. *Plym. Col. Records, Court Orders, Vol. III, p. 141. Prince's Chron. and Lightning at Marshfield in 1658 and 1666, Dr. N. B. Shurtleff, (1850), p. I.*
8. *There are over 20 published accounts of the death by lightning of John Phillips, Junior; many people (perhaps most, at that time) regarding this manner of death as by direct act of God.*

As such, and as of greater rarity than now, such a tragedy was then far more impressive than in these days.

9. *Plym. Col. Recs., Court Orders, Vol. III, p. 141. The account of the inquest, as then duly recorded, is given in full later. The event was also contemporaneously noted in the diary of John Hull, the famous mint-master of Boston, and elsewhere.*
10. *Capt. Nathaniel Thomas, son of William Thomas, Esq., one of the Pilgrim Merchant Adventurers, who "fitted out" the Mayflower, and who was for many years an Assistant Governor of Plymouth Colony, and probably the richest man in the community.*
11. *Capt. Thomas was later a colonel, judge and councilor and held many important positions of trust and responsibility in colonial affairs.*
12. *Dr. Shurtleff, op. cit. pp. 17 and 18. Mather Papers, in possession of Mass. Hist. Society.*
13. *Letter of Samuel Arnold, minister of Marshfield, to Rev. Increase Mather of Boston, dated July 28, 1683, in "Mather Papers"; Morton's New England Memorial, Davis Edition; Shurtleff's "Lightning at Marshfield," etc.*
14. *Miss M. A. Thomas' op. cit., p. 83, and Dr. Shurtleff's op. cit. pp. 47 and 49, taken together. As William Shurtleff's residence was well known and he and Phillips were neighbors, it is clear that the latter lived in the eastern part of the town and upon this all authorities agree.*
15. *John Phillips, Jr. had then been dead eight years.*
16. *Mr. Phillips evidently took over, upon his marriage to Mrs. Grace Holloway, the responsibility previously assumed by Rev. Mr. Bulkley, for the property interests of the Holloway girls (Plym. Col. Recs., Vol. III, p. 45) and took them with their mother to his home, where Grace clearly remained till just before her marriage, while Hannah (or Jane) was apparently a member of Mr. Phillips' household in 1668, two years after her mother's death, as indicated by the Colony Court Records (Plym. Col. Recs. Vol. IV, p. 187)*
17. *Josiah Reade and Grace Holloway were married November, 1666. (Marshfield Town Recs., Vol. I, p. 3.)*
18. *Aside from the fact that it was then strongly the custom to give the first son the father's name, by which John, Jr. was presumably the eldest son of Mr. Phillips, Dr. Shurtleff (op. cit. p. 40) calls him such, as do Davis (op. cit. p. 205) and Winsor (op. cit. p. 291). John was the first to leave home and Samuel apparently remained some years longer with his father.*
19. *Miss Thomas (op. cit. p. 83) says: "His [Mr. Phillips] third son Jeremiah." Dr. Shurtleff (op. cit. p. 40) names him as "the third son" and (p. 50) calls him "Jeremiah Phillips, a young man about twenty years of age, son of Mr. Phillips," while Goodwin (op. cit. pp. 355, 380) calls him "a lad."*
20. *The daughter Mary, by several proofs, never left home. Her father calls her "feeble-minded" in his will and provides for her as such. She evidently never married. She was very certainly at home in 1668, by the evidence of the Colony Records.*
21. *There are conflicting accounts as to how many children of Mr. Shurtleff were with their parents in Mr. Phillips' house when it was struck by lightning in 1666, some indicating three (3), but the weight of evidence gives but two (2). Dr. Shurtleff – presumably the best informed as well as the most interested of any of the writers – says: (op. cit. p. 50) "their sons William and Thomas." Rev. Mr. Arnold's letter to Rev. Increase Mather (a contemporaneous authority upon the spot) coincides, as does also Miss Thomas, the local historian. David (op. cit. p. 242) gives their names and births. There seem to have been only these two children recorded as born to Mr. Shurtleff before his death and the son Abiel born immediately after.*
22. *Timothy Rogers was a neighbor and as an eye-witness became the most important narrator of the occurrence.*
23. *Marshfield Town Records, Vol. I, p. 6. Mayflower Descendant, Vol. II, p. 182.*