

# Newsletter

Vol. 2 No. 8 Aug 2009

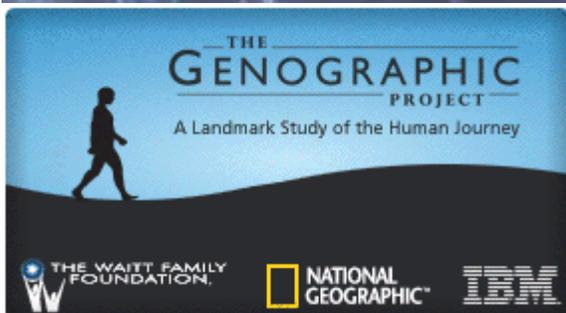
## From the Director - Space: NOT the "final frontier"

Remember the original Star Trek series which opened with William Shatner's voiceover, "Space: the final frontier..." It may have been a little premature to call it the "final" one. Two other frontiers in which we have barely scratched the surface in exploration are the oceans and our DNA. Considering how costly the exploration of space and the oceans are, DNA may very well end up being fully explored first.

And a fascinating aspect about DNA exploration is the contribution being made to the field of genetics by hobbyists. Several genetic genealogists who initially tested to learn more about their own ancestry and ended up with the expertise to make discoveries. [Jim Logan](#) and [William Hurst](#) are two who have collaborated with geneticists and authored papers. [Vincent Vizachero has used 23andMe tests to extract SNP data](#) and others like William Morrow have been recruiting testers for Family Tree DNA's new [Walk Through The Y](#) test. Through their work, new YSNPs are being discovered and placed on the YSNP Tree at an ever-growing pace. It would not be possible for these genetic genealogists to make these discoveries happen if it were not for those who have provided their DNA for testing. This means you. You can make a difference just by testing yourself or your family. You may choose to do something with lots of data like the 23andMe test, or the Walk Through The Y. However, you could just take the Genographic Project test ([see below](#)) where a smaller test may end up being part of a big contribution. Participants in the Genographic Project have contributed to science by inclusion in an [open source database](#) for scientific research.

So you see, there are many ways that you can be a James T. Kirk on the frontier of your DNA!

-Katherine Borges  
ISOGG Director



## Watch "[The Human Family Tree](#)" on National Geographic Channel Sunday, August 30th 9 pm ET/PT

On a single day on a single street, with the DNA of just a couple of hundred random people, National Geographic Channel sets out to trace the ancestral footsteps of all humanity. Narrated by Kevin Bacon, The Human Family Tree travels to one of the most diverse corners of the world -- Queens, N.Y. -- to demonstrate how we all share common ancestors who embarked on very different journeys. Regardless of race, nationality or religion, all of us can trace our ancient origin back to the cradle of humanity, East Africa. What did our collective journey look like, and where did it take your specific ancestors? At what point in our past did we first cross paths with the supposed strangers living in our neighborhood? Now, in The Human Family Tree, the people of this quintessential American melting pot find out that their connections go much deeper than a common ZIP code.

[Watch the trailer](#)

## World Premiere Screening of "The Human Family Tree"

You are invited to a [world premiere screening](#) of "The Human Family Tree" highlighting the community of Astoria

**Date:** Monday, August 24, 2009

**Time:** 8 p.m.

**Host:** Dr. Spencer Wells

**Location:** Astoria Park, Queens, NY Astoria Park Lawn on Shore Blvd. between Hell Gate Bridge and the pool. No RSVP is required.

### Special Offer on Genographic Kits

[Click here](#) to purchase a Genographic Public Participation Kit and receive 10% off the retail price from today through September 15, 2009. Or use discount code GENHUFA09 at checkout at the National Geographic online store only.

You will be able to compare your results with those featured in The Human Family Tree by logging into your results page after the film premieres on the National Geographic Channel, August 30th at 9 pm ET/PT

### Migration Stories...Share your story

For those who have taken part in the Genographic Project here is a new opportunity to participate and share your story. Now that you are exploring two compelling questions--Where do you really come from? And how did you get to where you live today?--we want to know more. How has learning your deep genetic ancestry affected your life?

Share your migration story (and send in photos or video), and we may publish it on the National Geographic website! Submit your migration story, photos, and video at [migration-stories.nationalgeographic.com](http://migration-stories.nationalgeographic.com)



### DNA may exonerate Dr. Crippen of murder nearly 100 years too late

A recent article by Chris Pomery published in [Family History Monthly](#) magazine has brought the notorious Dr. Crippen murder case to the world of genetic genealogy.

In 1910, Dr. Hawley Crippen was charged with murdering his wife, Cora. A torso, believed to be Cora's, was found under the floor of their home. Dr. Crippen was tried, found guilty, and hanged. The case has always bothered John Harris Trestail, a Michigan forensic toxicologist, because Dr. Crippen did not fit the profile of someone who murders with poison. When Trestail learned that mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) could be used in tracing female line ancestry, he approached a nurse who was also a genealogist, Beth Wills, and asked her to find female descendants related to Cora Crippen's mother. Using a technique known as "reverse genealogy", Wills located living descendants who agreed to submit mtDNA for testing.

But the conclusive proof did not hinge just on whether the mtDNA matched or not. A tissue sample on a slide used in the trial by forensic pathologist Dr. Bernard Spilsbury along with the mtDNA of Cora's relatives were sent to Dr. David Foran, director of the forensic science program at Michigan State University. Along with learning that while the mtDNA of the relatives tested all matched conclusively but did not match the tissue sample, Dr. Foran's team developed a new method of testing that proved the tissue sample thought to have come from Cora actually came from a male.

The results are to be published in a forthcoming paper, but Dr. Foran describes the new method, "Forensic scientists generally use a single copy gene (called amelogenin) on the X and Y chromosomes to sex samples. If female you get one (XX) result, and in males you get two (XY) results that differ slightly. But being at 1 copy, it is not very sensitive on old/poor material. We developed an assay for a marker on the Y chromosome that has about 4000 copies and paired it with another marker not on the Y that has a similar number.

From there it is the same thing - females give one result, males give 2. It is just far more sensitive. We have tested it on many known samples (e.g., hair shafts, where getting nuclear DNA results is extremely difficult) and it works well, so we tried it on the Spilsbury slide DNA. Somewhat to our surprise, it repeatedly tested as male."

As Trestail points out, "The evidence used to convince the jury that Hawley Crippen murdered his wife is not valid."

For more information on the Crippen Case visit [Michigan State's website](#), and you may be able to view a rerun of the case "[Executed in Error](#)" featured on the PBS series, "Secrets of the Dead".

Source: [http://www.nydailynews.com/news/ny\\_crime/2007/11/11/2007-11-11\\_a\\_question\\_of\\_murder.html?page=0](http://www.nydailynews.com/news/ny_crime/2007/11/11/2007-11-11_a_question_of_murder.html?page=0)

# What's **NEW** in ISOQG



## DNA in the News

[Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation is First to Adopt Genetic Genealogy's New Industry Standard for Reporting Y-DNA Profiles](#) - Earth Times - 17 Aug 2009

[Man with amnesia searches for clues](#) - The Wichita Eagle - 16 Aug 2009

[Family trait: Local man's DNA project traces Pike family histories](#) - The Telegram - 12 Aug 2009

[The Gerstenberger clan is seeking the roots of a big family tree](#) - Los Angeles Times - 8 Aug 2009

[Amelia Earhart Mystery May Soon be Solved](#) - Blisstree.com - 6 Aug 2009

[DNA Proves Scottish Roots of Haley Family](#) - Ancestry Magazine - Jul 2009

[DNA Brings Genealogies Closer Together](#) - Ancestry Magazine - Jul 2009

[Sheba, NYU researchers to draw genetic map of wandering Jew](#) - Jerusalem Post - 20 Jul 2009

For more articles:

<http://www.isogg.org/newsarchives.htm>

## NEW to the ISOQG Speaker's List:

**Stephen J. Danko**

**Region: San Francisco Bay Area**

**Terms: [Contact](#)**

Need a DNA Speaker?:

<http://isogg.org/resources/speakers.html>

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The ISOQG newsletter is a membership benefit of the world's first society founded for the promotion and education of genetic genealogy, ISOQG - The International Society of Genetic Genealogy. Membership is FREE! Members automatically receive the newsletter to share the latest news and happenings in the world of genetic genealogy.

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