

Newsletter

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From the Director

A Brief History of DNA Projects

Purchasing a genealogy or ancestry DNA test has only been commercially available since 2000. Before that time, a few pioneering individuals conducted genetic genealogy studies through universities. The first person to establish a surname DNA study was [Alan Savin in 1997](#) through University College, London. His example was followed in 1999 with studies established by [Pearl Duncan through the University of Arizona](#) and the [Sykes-Irven study at Oxford](#).¹

Surname DNA studies, or "DNA projects" as we know them today were the brainchild of [Bennett Greenspan](#). With the launch of Family Tree DNA (FTDNA) in 2000, he established a system where genealogists could coordinate their own surname DNA studies using web-based tools provided by FTDNA. Some of these resources include free public websites, FTDNATiP for calculating genetic distance, a discounted pricing structure for projects, and an annual conference for project administrators. DNA Project Administrators spend countless hours learning about genetic genealogy, developing and updating websites with results and information, and answering questions. It is an all volunteer position, but is very rewarding when genealogical breakthroughs are made.

Today, several companies offer DNA projects with quite a variety of different features ranging from uploading GEDCOMs to recipe sharing. Projects are not just limited to surnames either, but include projects for geographic/heritage, haplogroups, nulls, and mitochondrial DNA. Read about the [Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project](#) below which incorporates surname testing along with haplogroups and nulls for refining participants' matches and origins.

-Katherine Borges
ISOGG Director

¹Source: [DNA GENEALOGY TIMELINE](#) by Georgia Kinney Bopp

Featured
DNA Project



Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project

By David N. Ewing, MD

We have just surpassed the goal of recruiting 100 participants for the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project that we set when we started the project four years ago. Most of our participants have been recruited from the ranks of members of the Ewing Family Association (formerly known as Clan Ewing in America), and we have worked especially hard to collect the Ewing lineages of project participants. We think that the main value of the project will grow out of comparing DNA data with conventional genealogy.

Perhaps the most interesting finding is that approximately 2/3 of our participants have 37-marker haplotypes within a genetic distance of five from the overall Ewing modal, and constitute a distinctive cluster within the M222+ (Northwest Irish) SNP. The defining markers for this cluster are DYS442 = 11, DYS19 = 15, DYS456 = 18, DYS449 = 31 and DYS439 = 13, in decreasing order of specificity. It is also mildly interesting but probably not important that the Ewing modal matches the overall R1b (Western Atlantic) modal at CDYa/b rather than the M222+ modal. Otherwise, the Ewing modal matches the M222+ modal. Further, almost all of the Ewing men in this cluster match the M222+ modal at all 30 additional markers that make up the Family Tree DNA 67-marker panel. Within this large, closely related group of nearly seventy Ewings, there are two main branches characterized by a difference at DYS391. Most of these Ewings have the M222+ modal value of 11 at this marker, but about a third of them have DYS391 = 10.

Of course, the fact that 2/3 of our participants are in one cluster means that 1/3 of them are not in the cluster. These include two pairs of related men also in M222+ but not in the "Ewing cluster." One pair of these men closely matches the modal for the McLaughlin's of Donegal. We have five men in Haplogroup I, including three known relatives who have a null DYS 425, so are virtually certain to be M284+ and therefore in the I2b1a-Isles subclade. Otherwise, all of our participants are in R1b1c; several are in small clusters (including a few in McEwan's R1bSTR47-Scots cluster) but most are singletons. The only non-M222+ Ewing who has been deep-clade tested is R1b1c*.

We have three men in the Ewing project with surnames unrelated to Ewing: Smith, Hodges and Young. Smith descends from a known non-paternal event (NPE) and we have identified his Ewing ancestor. Hodges and Young both have family stories that suggest NPEs (an adoption of young children in the case of Hodges, and a mysterious surname change of one son "after granddad died" in the case of Young). There are some other credible matches out on ysearch.org -- including some Hagans that we have not connected with yet. We have several Ewins in the project; all are known to be descended from Ewings and we know when the name changes occurred. A couple of these are in the closely related group and a couple are in haplogroup I1b2a1. We also have a Ewen, a couple of Ewans and a couple of McEwans, but none of these are in M222+.

Please visit our project website at: http://www.clanewing.org/DNA_Project/index_Y-DNA.html for more information. Look first at the "Results Introduction" and "Help" links to get oriented and figure out how the website works.



Could you have inherited immunity

to plague and AIDS?

A recent broadcast airing on the PBS series, "[Secrets of the Dead](#)" - [The Mystery of the Black Death](#) profiled the CCR5-delta32 gene credited with saving the village of Eyam, England from extermination during a plague epidemic in September 1665. If you missed this episode, you can read the [background](#) article about the show and [clues and evidence](#) for how delta32 prevents carriers from being infected with plague and HIV.

Could the dreaded invasions of Britain during the Viking Age have helped save them from being completely wiped out by the plague? In an [interview](#) with Dr. Stephen O'Brien, he mentions the 3,000-4,000 year-old excavated human remains in Scandinavia that contain the delta32 mutation. The Viking theory is also referred to in a recent study, "[Is the European spatial distribution of the HIV-1-resistant CCR5-Delta32 allele formed by a breakdown of the pathocenosis due to the historical Roman expansion?](#)" by E. Faure, et al., suggests that "...the Vikings have been instrumental in disseminating the CCR5-delta32 allele in Iceland".

To find out if you inherited CCR5-delta 32, existing Family Tree DNA customers can order the test through the "Advanced Orders" panel under the "Order Tests and Upgrades" tab on their "My FTDNA" page. CCR5-delta 32 is also included in 23andMe's test.



[NIST Guides Genetic Genealogy Labs Toward Improved Accuracy](#)

- Medical News Today - 30 Dec 2008

[Some US Hispanics trace their Jewish past](#)

- Christian Science Monitor - 29 Dec 2008

[DNA results show no link to ancient human remains](#)

- Capital City Weekly - 24 Dec 2008

[Searchers Find Remains Of Teutonic Knights Leaders](#)

- CBS News - 12 Dec 2008

[Meeting My New Family](#)

- Ancestry Magazine - Dec 2008

For more articles:

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

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