

Newsletter

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From the Director - Autosomal DNA: The New Revolution - Part 2

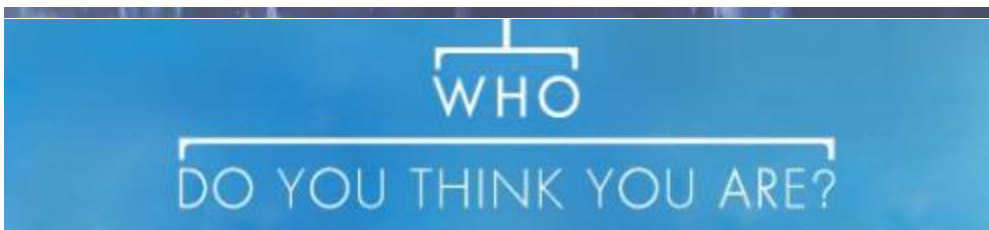
In continuation from the article began in the [January 2010 ISOGG Newsletter](#) - Family Tree DNA announced in February they would be offering an [autosomal DNA](#) test called "[Family Finder](#)". The new test launched in beta and is ordered by invitation only. Family Tree DNA President, Bennett Greenspan, debuted the test at the "[Who Do You Think You Are? LIVE!](#)" conference in London, England on February 26-28, 2010. He commented that, "Since I first realized the importance of the Y-chromosome for genealogical purposes in 1999, I have not been as excited about any genetic tool until now".

The first results from the beta launch came in around mid-March and there are already success stories pouring in. (See Brent Bradberry's success story below.) Two important things to know about this new test is that while the confidence level is in the fifth cousin range, the test may detect small matching segments from ancestors farther back than the fifth cousin range. Many people who have had successes discover that their common ancestor lived in the 1600's. So it is very important to enter your ancestral surnames at least back to that time frame if possible.

To enter your surnames, login to your "My FTDNA" page and click the "Chromosome Browser" tab and then click the "Edit My Family Finder Profile" tab on the right side. It will give you the option to either manually enter individual surnames or upload a GEDCOM. When one of your matches has a surname in common with you, the system will highlight that surname.

Remember, because autosomal DNA is received from both of your parents, this means you will have matches with males and females, even including **females** with your surname. This has happened to me; I have a match to a female sixth cousin with my maiden name and I cannot tell you how amazing a feeling it is to be a female and **FINALLY** be able to see shared DNA in **ME** from my **PATERNAL** line! And after all these years of having to recruit male relatives for Y-chromosome testing...autosomal DNA has broken the gender barrier. We will see many more genetic genealogy success stories to come from it.

-Katherine Borges
ISOGG Director



Who Do You Think You Are?

If you are not watching "[Who Do You Think You Are?](#)" on NBC on Friday nights, you are missing the best new show on primetime TV in America! Fortunately, you can watch any episodes you have missed via the online website, but now that you know what you are missing, be sure to tune in for the remaining three shows.

This show is turning out to be a real boon for genealogy by sparking people's interest in their family history. One ISOGG member's experience: "I have three grown children and only the youngest has shown even a mild interest in genealogy. However, WDYTYA has become a favorite TV program of her children - girls aged 9 and 6. The girls will not be home this Friday and insist it be taped; a must not miss program. The older one has been taken with the ties to history of the first two programs - she "knew" the people and was amazed at the history that unfolded. The younger one was spellbound by Emmitt (for her, from both football and Dancing with the Stars) and his journey back to his roots in Africa."

And speaking of Dallas Cowboys Hall of Famer, Emmitt Smith; he is the first in the series (the U.S. version at least) to try genetic ancestry testing to explore his roots.

Emmitt Smith was tested at three different DNA companies: DNA-Ancestry, 23andMe.com and African Ancestry. Megan Smolenyak2, author of the "[Who Do You Think You Are? The Essential Guide to Tracing Your Family History](#)", presented the results to Emmitt on the show. The autosomal DNA percentages were done by 23andMe and to Megan's surprise, Emmitt had a higher percentage of African DNA than she has seen before in an African-American.

Megan also shared that, "Since appearing in that episode, I've been bombarded with emails with questions about DNA testing, so I hope we're getting some fresh recruits!"



DNA Success Stories

A Family Finder Success Story

By Brent Bradberry

I was one of the early birds to join the Family Finder program at FTDNA, and as an "old hand" (but far from expert) genealogist I was prepared for a long wait for any worthwhile results. I have had a lifelong interest in my maternal grandfather's family (MARTIN) and I still remember sixty and more years ago listening to the old folks talk about early times. My Martin line seemed exciting – early settlers in Texas and before that frontier life in Virginia, Kentucky and Illinois. Over the years I've discovered that my Martin ancestors include three generations of frontier preachers and (at least) one colorful rogue. The good news for my research was that quite a bit has been written about the Martins, at least from the late 18th century on; the bad news was that there were several Martin families in the same areas at the same times and to make matters worse most of the men had common names (John, William, James, etc) and they tended to recycle the names each generation.

By conventional means, I had found a paper trail back to my 3rd great-grandfather James Scott Martin, but knew only that his father was John Martin, possibly from Virginia – and there were perhaps dozens of John Martins who might be "mine". One other clue was the family story that my great-grandfather Thomas Jefferson Martin and great-grandmother Anne Marie Attebery were related in some way.

The first set of Family Finder results included two matches for me, both at the 5th cousin and beyond level. I emailed both of my new distant cousins and within 48 hours had exchanged ancestral surnames. One match hasn't revealed the connection yet, but the other match revealed a Martin connection, and my new cousin's family tree shows that our common ancestors are John and Sarah Isabel (Scott) Martin – the 4th great-grandparents I had been looking for. As a bonus, I have discovered that Thomas Jefferson Martin and Ann Marie Attebery were both great-grandchildren of John and Sarah Martin, and thus second cousins. I am thus doubly descended from John and Sarah.

I know that this discovery could have been made by conventional means, without the aid of autosomal DNA comparison, given enough time, effort and luck. However the speed and ease of this discovery is very impressive, and I'm looking forward to more discoveries as the Family Finder database grows.

For more DNA success stories or to submit yours, visit:

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



DNA in the News

DNA in the News

Possible new human ancestor found in Siberia - Reuters - 24 Mar 2010

Mysteries of monotheistic pharaoh unveiled with DNA tests - The Daily Star - 18 Mar 2010

Glenn Close's genome sequenced by Illumina - Sign On San Diego - 12 Mar 2010

History hides under bark of the family tree - Newsleader.com - 10 Mar 2010

For more articles:

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