

Newsletter

Vol. 3 No. 7 Nov 2010

From the Director - In Search of: Native American DNA - Part 2

In the [November 2008 ISOGG Newsletter](#), I wrote about the different DNA tests available to detect Native American ancestry. Since that time, two new tests have become available, 23andMe's [Relative Finder](#) and Family Tree DNA's [Family Finder](#). Shortly after the launch of Relative Finder in the Fall of 2009, the company debuted a new tool called "[Native American Ancestry Finder](#)" which assesses whether a person has Native American ancestry based on their mitochondrial DNA, autosomal DNA and if a male, Y-chromosome DNA. This past September, Family Tree DNA launched "[Population Finder](#)" which reveals Native American DNA using Family Finder autosomal results. One caveat of autosomal testing is that this type of testing is effective for more recent generations, i.e: great-grandparents range, possibly a little farther back. If you're looking to uncover Pocahontas' DNA in your tree, its not going to show.

Read my success story below, "[Searching for Native American Ancestry](#)" as to how DNA testing has helped to trace Native American ancestry within my family.

-Katherine Borges
ISOGG Director



Searching for Native American Ancestry

by Katherine Borges

One fateful day back in the year 2000, I asked my father-in-law what he knew about his ancestry. His father was 100% Portuguese and his mother was a mix of Swiss-French on her father's side and Heinz 57 American on her mother's side. And then the words that propelled me on this search: "...and I think I may have a Native American ancestor."

As exciting as that statement might be, I never found it on paper. Perhaps the reason why is because there never was one and his DNA results appear to confirm that. But this journey wasn't without tantalizing tidbits along the way. Like the photo of his great-grandmother where she had a Native American look about her. We are brickwalled at her parents so you never know, it was a clue that might have panned out. But then there's the DNA...

In 2004, I thought that if I tested my son, that it would show whether he had Native American ancestry so I ordered an autosomal DNA test for him through a company called "DNA Print".

His results came back as 92% Caucasian and 8% East Asian. "EAST ASIAN??? My son doesn't have any Asian ancestry." I said. My friend, Dr. Ana Oquendo Pabón gently assured me that the East Asian was really Native American in my son; its just that the company didn't have his type of NA DNA in their database so he matched the next closest type. While Ana's explanation made sense, the test didn't quite give me the clear cut answer I was hoping for.

The next test I tried for the search was a single marker test for [D9S919](#) first offered by Family Tree DNA in the Fall of 2008. Since the company already had his DNA on file, I had the test performed on my son and the results were once again, inconclusive.

One year later, 23andMe came out with their Relative Finder autosomal DNA test so the very first one I ordered was on my father-in-law. His results came back 100% European, primarily Southern European which fits with his 50% Portuguese ancestry. Alas, it appeared that the lack of finding a Native American paper trail in his family tree had now been firmly corroborated through DNA.

However, this didn't turn out to be the end of the search. During this time, mtDNA results came in for my mother-in-law's brother and sister as Haplogroup C - a Native American haplogroup! I also tested one of their female first cousins through the National Geographic Genographic Project and she came back as Haplogroup A - another Native American haplogroup! One month later, both my son and his great-aunt tested through 23andMe and both had Native American

autosomal DNA results through the feature, Native American Ancestry Finder. My mother-in-law's ancestry is 3/4 Mexican and 1/4 Austrian so the results do fit with their Mexican ancestry.

So this journey through different types of DNA testing led to success in finding Native American ancestry, even though it wasn't where I initially thought it might have originated. And this can serve as a cautionary tale that just one test might not provide the answer, but don't give up! You never know what's just around the corner to give you the answer that you're searching for.

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

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



DNA in the News

DNA in the News

[Christopher Columbus 'was son of Polish king'](#) - The Telegraph - 28 Nov 2010

[Mysteries of Tiny Bodies From 1930s Will Linger](#) - New York Times - 17 Nov 2010

[Ancient DNA Reveals Origins Of First European Farmers](#) - Medical News Today 10 Nov 2010

[Branching out](#) - The Southern Gazette - 3 Nov 2010

For more articles:

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

The ISOGG newsletter is a membership benefit of the world's first society founded for the promotion and education of genetic genealogy, ISOGG - 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.

Newsletter online - printer friendly version

[Past editions](#) - (RSS feed instructions available)

To subscribe, send e-mail:

isoggnewsletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

To unsubscribe, send e-mail:

isoggnewsletter-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

Questions?:

isogg@msn.com

To translate the newsletter into other languages:

http://www.google.com/language_tools?hl=en



This work is licensed under a

[Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License.](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/)

