

# Newsletter

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## From the Director - The (Unintentional) Symbiotic Relationship of Family Tree DNA and 23andMe

Family Tree DNA and 23andMe are two innovative Direct-to-Consumer (DTC) genetics companies that offer primarily different DNA testing products. Family Tree DNA's most popular products are their Y-chromosome STR tests which 23andMe does not offer. It is likely that the majority of 23andMe's customers tested at 23andMe to receive non-diagnostic health and trait information. These two companies do not have any sort of [formal partnership the way that 23andMe and Ancestry.com do](#)

yet they have a symbiotic relationship of mutual benefit to each other and to consumers.

The symbiotic relationship began when genetic genealogists discovered that 23andMe's chip contained Y-SNPs that had not been placed on the Y-haplogroup tree. As it became evident that Y-SNP results from 23andMe could be useful in finding new haplogroup subclades. Family Tree DNA added these SNPs to their product offering. Many of these SNPs have since been placed on the Y-Tree. While the bulk of the discoveries have no doubt been made, there are still a few "new" ones popping up here and there. For instance, Bonnie Schrack recently announced a new SNP placement [in haplogroup J1e](#).

The other half of this symbiotic relationship could result from Family Tree DNA's new test, "Walk Through The Y". Since the WTY uses direct sequencing to discover new Y-SNPs, FTDNA can explore areas of the Y-chromosome that 23andMe's chip does not. As FTDNA discovers new SNPs, they are also added to FTDNA's product line and are placed on the Y-Tree. So the next time that 23andMe does a chip upgrade, these new FTDNA discovered SNPs, along with those from other research projects, can be added to their custom chip.

As I previously wrote in the [August 2009 ISOGG newsletter](#), this is yet another example where genetic genealogists' contributions to genetics benefit the companies and consumers.

-Katherine Borges  
ISOGG Director

Contribution credit: Thanks to James "Larry" Vick for his contributions to this article!



## Finding Family Ties

by Susan Squires

When I was about 16, my family took a vacation in Newfoundland, an island off the coast of Canada. It can be a cold stark place, which many 'newfies' refer to as the 'Rock.' But it also has its own charm with its long grassy meadows reaching down to the sea where flocks of sheep graze, and the low rumble of icebergs can be heard long before seeing their green glow as they float on a cloud of mist in the water. My father had been born on this island leaving at age ten. While I was charmed by the alien terrain of the place, I could not help wondering why my family had settled here and from where? A search for my Squires family's roots began during that vacation.

Thirty years later I know why they immigrated to Newfoundland. In the 17th and 18th century it was the place to go to make your fortune. Cod could be pulled from the water in baskets and profitably sold to the Catholic countries of Europe where the fish was in great demand during Lent and for Friday's dinner. But from where remained a mystery. How I discovered where my family came from is a success story about using Y-chromosome DNA.

The Squires paper trail took me back to Captain John Squires and his wife, Catherine both born in Newfoundland according to a 1794 census. They lived on a small island, Bell Isle, in Conception Bay Newfoundland as did another family of Squires. In 1799, John drowned with all hands as his ship went down in the bay during a storm. Strangely, I could not

find any records for John's birth but assumed he was related to the other Squires family on Belle Isle who were said to come from either Devon or the Channel Islands. Trips to Jersey, one of the Channel Islands, Devon's West Country Library in Exeter and the Bristol Record Office have not been successful. Finally, I decided to turn to genetics.

My brother agreed to a 67 marker test. The results provided many 12 marker matches; none associated with the Squires surname. Becoming more proactive, I became the administrator of the Squires Surname project contacting people with the surname Squires to join. Although the Squires Surname project is small we began to find family groupings in the Carolinas and New England, but, not for my Squires YDNA. So, I began to recruit Squires with ties to Newfoundland. People were lovely agreeing to the test. I think they were as intrigued as I to learn about the family roots. But, again, we found no matches even at 12 markers.

Then one day I got an email from Family Tree DNA telling me that I had a 67 marker match. This was the match I had hoped for but the match belonged to someone named Pitt! Obviously the Squires and Pitts had lived near each other at some point. The next step was to find where and when. Correspondence established that the Pitt family had been traced back to an Andrew Pitt in Virginia. It was another Squires who found the Pitt/Squires connection on Belle Isle itself. The very 1794 census that records my ancestor Capt John Squires also records a James Pitt renting land from Frances Squires, the other Squires family on the island, and he was the right age to be Capt John's father. To confirm this possible paternity this far back in time, a distant cousin agreed to test confirming that our mutual great grandfather, born in 1823, carried the Squires/Pitt markers.

I felt pretty confident that James Pitt was the father of John Squires by a Squires female and did some research on the Pitt family of Newfoundland. According to them, James Pitt was born 1735 in Kennford, Devon, a small village on the Kenn river. Local church records confirmed that James was born there. However, I also discovered something else; the other family living in Kennford is Squires! Now I am not so sure when the Pitt/Squires YDNA change occurred. More testing is needed to untangle this new mystery. YDNA testing has given me new unexpected insights and holds the potential to reveal so much more about my family tree.

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

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

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#### **DNA testing of guests on "Lopez Tonight"**

Jessica Alba will be a guest on comedian George Lopez's TBS show, "Lopez Tonight". A unique feature of the show is the DNA testing of guests. Guest [Larry David, was DNA tested](#) on a previous episode. Ms. Alba's test results will be revealed on the December 1 show and the show's website features a place to cast your vote as to what you think her genetic make-up might be.

[Cast your vote now!](#)

#### **Faces of America**

Check out a [new promo](#) on You Tube for the new PBS series "Faces of America" airing in 2010. The series will feature many celebrities and DNA testing is a component of the show. Meryl Streep is shown discussing mitochondrial DNA. For more information about "Faces of America" visit Blaine Bettinger's blog, "[The Genetic Genealogist](#)".

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# What's *NEW* in ISOQG



## DNA in the News

[Genealogy magazine takes on genetics](#) - Bangor Daily News - 30 Nov 2009

[Are You My Cousin?](#) - Huffington Post - 16 Nov 2009

[Technology helps unearth family trees](#) - CNN - 9 Nov 2009

[DNA Tests in Ghana May Shed Light on African-American Origins](#) - Genealogy Insider - 26 Oct 2009

[Society of Genealogists Members Help in Genetic Genealogy Research](#) - SoG - 15 Oct 2009

[I.B.M. Joins Pursuit of \\$1,000 Personal Genome](#) - NY Times - 5 Oct 2009

For more articles:

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

## NEW ISOQG page - 23andMe Tools

<http://www.isogg.org/23andmetools.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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