

Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project – Article 15

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This is the fifteenth in a series of articles about the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project. The previous fourteen articles have appeared in the last fourteen issues of the *Journal of Clan Ewing*. They are also available online through links at the project's web site (www.ClanEwing.org/DNA_Project/index_Y-DNA.html). Extensively cross-linked results tables, project participant lineages, group relationship diagrams and results diagrams (network diagrams and a phylogeny) are also available on the project's web site.

Recognition for the Ewing Y-DNA Project

The 5th International Conference on Genetic Genealogy for Family Tree DNA (FTDNA) Group Administrators will be held in Houston on November 8th - 9th this year. This two-day convention is attended by a couple of hundred folks who run surname projects like *Clan Ewing's* Y-DNA project. Several of the top scientists in the field will speak, as well as various experts in anthropological genetics, genealogy, computers, ethics and many other areas. Each year, one of the group administrators is invited to present a report on their project. I am very pleased to announce that the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project has been selected for this honor this year. The project's web site has already been recognized by the International Society of Genetic Genealogy for excellence. We think that the way the project has integrated conventional genealogy and genetic data is unique and especially informative. In addition to this, the project has become a pioneer in exploring the usefulness of DYF399X in genetic genealogy. We think that these are some of the reasons we were selected for this honor.

By now, I have a fair amount of experience giving introductory talks to groups of twenty-to-thirty people who know little about the subject, but you can imagine how intimidating it will be to speak to over a hundred people, many of whom know vastly more about the subject than I do. The conference is more than three months away and already I have a moderate case of the shudders. What I need is a volunteer from *Clan Ewing* to come along for moral support. Seriously, FTDNA allows for up to three representatives for each surname project to attend the convention, but space is limited and we should make plans soon. This is a tremendous opportunity for an interested person to take a huge step forward in his or her understanding of genetic genealogy in general and the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project in particular. It would be a great advantage to *Clan Ewing* to have some other members to become thoroughly knowledgeable about the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project. I am not asking for a commitment from anyone to become co-administrator of the project on an on-going basis, though obviously I could use some help and I would like this very much. We will have to ask whoever attends to pay their own expenses, but I would be willing to pay the \$139 registration fee for anyone willing to commit to becoming a co-administrator of the project, and I am willing to spend as much time explaining the project as anyone who attends can stand, regardless of whether or not they want any ongoing involvement. Volunteers will not be expected to speak or answer questions, but it would be very helpful if they bring a couple of dry hankies in case I burst into tears. Please, please, please take me up on this, someone. Contact me soon if you would like to come, as I will need to handle the registration and supply you with more details.

Progress of the Project

A number of new participants have joined the project this quarter. We now have results on eighty-two Ewing men, including seven with variant spellings of the name and one named Smith. The lab is in the process of analyzing samples on five other men, and we are waiting for three men to return DNA collection kits that have been sent to them — if these all come in, we will have 90 participants. Furthermore, we had a tremendous response to the sale FTDNA recently had on upgrades to larger marker panels, and nine men are waiting for results on 67-marker upgrades.¹ As you know, our initial goal for the project was to recruit a hundred participants. It looks like we might just make it in time for *Echoes of the Shenandoah*, though it is doubtful that we will have had time for a full analysis of results for participants who have not joined the project by now. Still, the gathering is not a deadline and we welcome participation by Ewings, Ewins, Ewans, Ewens, McEwans and McEwens everywhere! Information on how to join the project is at the end of this article.

Variant Spellings

Since our last article, we have had a couple of men with variant spellings of the name join the DNA project. A McEwen who was already a member of the McKeon project has added his 67-marker results to the Ewing project. I do not have his lineage yet, or permission to publish his name, but his results put him in our Group 8, where he is closest to the cluster containing SL, ME and PA, but not so close as to be considered related to them in a genealogic time frame — he is genetic distance 11 and 12 from SL and ME, respectively, and 16 from PA. This McEwen, SL and ME are definitely in the R1bSTR47-Scot cluster described by John McEwan and PA probably is as well, but McEwen is the closest of these to the cluster modal. This cluster is found at its highest percentage in the Scottish Highlands, and some folks have argued that it originated in the Picts, but nobody knows that for a fact.²

We have also had a man named Ewen join the project, but his DNA sample is in the lab and results are not expected until about August 1st, after the deadline for this issue of the *Journal*.

And speaking of 'variant' spellings, what do you think about 'Smith'? Imagine my surprise a few weeks ago when the 67-marker haplotype of Tennis Smith (TNS) suddenly appeared in our project. I had a look at the results and found that he was only genetic distance 2 from WR in Group 5, Part 1, a descendant of our old friend, 'I think his name was William.' I called Tennis and his dad, William R. 'Bill' Smith, and heard a terrific story. Bill's version of the story appears elsewhere in this issue of the *Journal*.³ Tennis initially tested with the National Geographic project.⁴ Sometime later he had a look at

¹ Among them are two men in Group 9, three in Group 6, one in Group 8 and three in Group 1. These results will undoubtedly help us better understand the significance of the additional markers, so our advice to those of you who have not ordered the upgrade is to wait and see what our new recommendation may be once we have received and completed the analysis of these results. I expect we should have that done by the time of the 2008 Gathering.

² You can read a slightly out-of-date discussion of this in a section headed *McEwan's Data* toward the end of *Haplogroups, Haplotypes, and Clusters for the Flustered*, which can be found in the Resources section of the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project's web site (www.clanewing.org/DNA_Project/index_Y-DNA.html). Our new McEwen participant would show up on the chart there under R1bSTR43 at genetic distance 4 from the cluster modal.

³ Smith, William R. A Family Story, *J. Clan Ewing*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (August 2008), pp. 17-19.

⁴ www3.nationalgeographic.com/genographic

YSearch⁵ for potential matches, and when he saw several Ewings he remembered an old family story about a doctor down in Alabama named Whitley T. Ewing, who supposedly was the 'real' father of Tennis' great-great-grandfather. I was able to find Whitley T. Ewing in Fife,⁶ and sure enough, he was descended from the same Samuel Ewing, born 1740, that WR is descended from. WR and William R. Smith are fifth cousins, more or less. This got me a little cooked up, and I began to think that Whitley was not such a common given name, so I had a look in the national white pages online and found Whitley W. Ewing in Carlsbad, California. It turns out that he is a former member of *Clan Ewing*, but though he knew he was descended from Joshua Ewing (father of Samuel, born 1740), his family was from Oregon and he did not know of any Whitley T. Ewing in Alabama. I spoke with him again a few days later, after he had spoken with his cousin, Wilma Evoniuk, in Eugene, and she told him that their ancestor who had settled in Oregon, William Ewing (m. Rebecca Brand), was the older brother of Whitley T. Ewing. Excellent! Now Whitley W. Ewing has also joined the DNA project and has rejoined *Clan Ewing*. We should have his results by the middle of August or so. Sometimes this stuff just knocks me out.

DYF399X Update

I have just sent an updated DYF399X Report (as of July 13, 2008) to all of the project participants that have had this test, and it should be posted on the web site⁷ by the time you get this issue of the *Journal*. We now have results on twenty-four men in the closely related group, plus JMc in Group 8.⁸ In the last issue of the *Journal*, I discussed the rationale for this test in some detail in *Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project – Article 14*, under the heading *Differentiating Closely Related Families*.⁹ Interpretation of the results has not changed too much on consideration of the new results we have received since then, but we had one mildly disappointing finding, which can serve to illustrate a point about this marker.

RA and JC have very similar 37-marker haplotypes, matching one another at $DYS\ 390 = 24$, and differing only at the three most rapidly mutating markers in the 37-marker panel. Both are in Group 1, and neither knows their conventional genealogic connection with any other Ewings. Because DYF399X mutates so rapidly, a close match would support a close relationship, particularly if there were a close match at some off-modal values. As it happens, their DYF399X results differ by two steps at each of two alleles:

RA	23t-26c-28.1t
JC	21t-26c-26.1t

Though this result does not support a close relationship as we had hoped it might, it does not rule out a close relationship. Remember, the fact that DYF399X mutates so rapidly requires us to treat it somewhat the opposite of the other markers: We can use it to support a hypothesized relationship, but

⁵ www.YSearch.org, a free public database of Y-DNA results maintained by FTDNA.

⁶ Fife, Margaret Ewing, *Ewing in Early America*, Chapter 25, page 210, individual D.6. Fife's book is available from www.HigginsonBooks.com and online at www.ClanEwing.org.

⁷ A detailed DYF399X Report and a table of actual results is available on the project's web site at www.ClanEwing.org/DNA_Project/DNA_Articles/Document_DYF399XReport.html.

⁸ The Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project Groups are defined and described in the Results Introduction page on our web site at www.ClanEwing.org/DNA_Project/index_Y-DNA_Results.html.

⁹ Ewing, David Neal. Surname Y-DNA Project – Article 14, *J. Clan Ewing*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (May 2008), p. 31.

we can not use it to rule out a relationship. Another example of this is FI, who had a very confusing result on DYF399X,¹⁰ totally unlike any of the other men in our project (and I daresay, unlike anyone else who has ever been tested), but this cannot be used to argue that he is from Mars.

Some R1b1b2e Haplotypes not in the Closely Related Group

R1b1b2e is the new nomenclature for what used to be called R1b1c7. This is a clade (sub-branch) of Haplogroup R1b that is defined by the SNP M222+, but can also be recognized on the basis of a pattern of STR markers.¹¹ Based mostly on the fact that this clade has been found at its greatest frequency (about 20%) in Northwest Ireland, some have associated this group with Nial of the Nine Hostages and his descendants, the Ui Niall, whose main stomping grounds were once in this area. The large closely-related group of Ewings is in R1b1b2e, but forms a distinct cluster within the group. To give you some perspective on this, consider that in 37-marker haplotypes, members of completely different Haplogroups, such as R and I, are going to be at genetic distances on the order of 40 or more from one another, while members of R1b are likely to be within genetic distance 20 or so, and members of R1b1b2e are likely to be within genetic distance 10 or so. We have defined the 'closely-related group of Ewings' (let us call this the 'Ewing cluster') on the basis that all are within genetic distance 5 of the Ewing cluster modal. As it happens, genetic distance 5 is about the limit of what we would expect to find in relationships within a genealogic time frame.

Up until a month ago all but one of the R1b1b2e men in the Ewing project were in the Ewing cluster. Lonesome old TD was the only exception. His haplotype is actually a little closer to the R1b1b2e modal than the Ewing modal is, but he is genetic distance 9 from the Ewing modal — too distant to include him in the cluster. I have had a terrible time trying to figure out where to put him, because he is not in any of the kinship groups, he is not in Group 8 because that is defined on the basis of being in R1b but *not* in R1b1b2e, and he should not really be in Group 1 because that is defined on the basis of being within genetic distance 5 of the Ewing modal and not in one of the kinship groups. I have ended up displaying his results with Group 1, but adding footnotes saying that he does not belong there.

A month ago, Eddie Lee Ewing (EL) joined the project, and now TD has some company. EL is also genetic distance 9 from the Ewing modal, and he and TD are at genetic distance 6 from one another. Have a look at these results in the table on the following page.

I have left eleven columns of data out of this table, all at markers where TD, EL, the UiN (R1b1b2e) modal and the Ewing modal are exactly the same. Highlighting is with respect to the Ewing modal. What can we make of this? First of all, notice that the Ewing modal differs from the UiN modal at DYS 19, DYS 439, DYS 449, DYS 456, CDYa/b and DYS 442. At four of these seven markers, both TD and EL match the UiN modal and not the Ewing modal. At one of them, DYS 456, TD and EL are one step from the UiN modal in a different direction than Ewing. TD and EL match the Ewing modal and not the UiN

¹⁰ His result is 21t-24c-24t. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss this in any depth. But, briefly, while the first two alleles are not surprising and match several of the other men in the project, the third allele has a completely different configuration than it usually has. For some correspondence about this with Thomas Krahn, an expert in these matters, see the end of the *DYF399X Report* posted on the project's web site:
www.clanewing.org/DNA_Project/index_Y-DNA.html.

¹¹ You can read about this in *Haplogroups, Haplotypes, and Clusters for the Flustered* in the Resource section of the project's web site, www.clanewing.org/DNA_Project/index_Y-DNA.html.

To Join or Get More Information

If you are ready to join the project, go to www.familytreedna.com/surname_join.aspx?code=M44915. Participation by Ewing women is welcome; they can get valuable genealogic information by persuading a male relative to submit a specimen. For more information, visit the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project's web site¹³ and the FTDNA web site.¹⁴ If you want to ask questions, call me at +1 505.764.8704 in the evening, or EMail me at [davidewing93 at gmail dot com](mailto:davidewing93@gmail.com).

David Neal Ewing has been a member of Clan Ewing in America since 1996 and has served as its Chancellor since 2006. He previously served as Chair of its Board of Directors from 2004-2006. He is also Administrator of the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project, which he founded in 2004, and he is a regular contributor to the Journal of Clan Ewing. Dr. Ewing has a private practice in clinical geriatric neuropsychiatry in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He received his M.D. degree from the University of New Mexico and did his residency training at the University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

¹³ www.ClanEwing.org/DNA_Project/index_Y-DNA.html

¹⁴ www.FamilyTreeDNA.com/public/Ewing