

Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project – Article 16

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This is the sixteenth in a series of articles about the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project. The previous fifteen articles have appeared in the last fifteen issues of this *Journal*. 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 network diagrams are also available on the project's web site.

Recognition for the Ewing Y-DNA Project

Hurricane Ike damaged the hotel in Houston so badly that the conference I was scheduled to address in November has been rescheduled for the weekend of March 14-15 next year. The good news is that this gives me a lot more time to prepare. The bad news is that I will end up spending a lot more time preparing for the conference, and the quality of the next couple of Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project articles may suffer as a result. It is also perilously close to the time that our daughter is due to deliver our third grandchild, an event that I would hate to miss.

We have also just learned somewhat belatedly that the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project's web site was featured by the International Society of Genetic Genealogy (ISOGG) as their 'Web Site of the Month' in August. They especially liked the web site's Relationship Diagrams. Thanks, ISOGG!

Progress of the Project

Several new participants joined the project at *Echoes of the Shenandoah* and immediately afterwards, and we have now achieved our goal of recruiting a hundred project participants, just as the project is celebrating its fourth birthday. Part of the reason we had such a flurry of new participants is that Family Tree DNA (FTDNA) was running a terrific sale that ended September 30. The sale is over, but now FTDNA has announced a new 'regular' price. The 37-marker panel we recommend to most new participants used to cost \$189, but it is now available for \$149 (plus \$4 shipping and handling). Isn't it great that something on this planet (besides our real estate and stock portfolios) is actually going down in price? As I recall when I got my testing done four years ago, I paid something like \$225 for the same test.

I am very pleased to announce that Karen Avery has agreed (reluctantly and tentatively, after a great deal of arm-twisting) to serve as co-administrator of the project. Karen has for some time been an active participant and has recruited quite a few Ewings from several different lines to join the project. She brings to the project a much more comprehensive knowledge of conventional Ewing genealogy than I have. She has also just joined Jill Spitler as Membership Coordinator – New Members for *Clan Ewing*. We are finding that sometimes the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project is a portal for joining *Clan Ewing*, and sometimes *Clan Ewing* is a portal for joining the project, so these two activities dovetail nicely. Karen knows way more about this stuff than she thinks she knows, but for now, she would appreciate it if you would continue to direct technical questions to me.

Since the middle of July we have received a boat-load of new results. We have new results on nine participants who have upgraded to 67-markers, six new participants with 37-marker results, and a

second Ewan man with 12-marker results. We have one new set of DYF399X results, and six more sets of DYF399X results pending. Eight more participants have samples in the lab awaiting 37-marker analysis (partial results have already come in on a couple of them), and seven participants have sent for collection kits that have not yet been returned to the lab for processing.

Variant Spellings

I spoke in my last article about the interesting case of Tennis Smith (TNS), who determined partly on the basis of his Y-DNA test results that he is descended from Whitley T. Ewing (b1823). I located William Whitley Ewing (WW), who is descended from Whitley T. Ewing's older brother, William, and persuaded him to join the project, but his results were pending at the time of the last article. Now we have these results, and sure enough, WW and TNS share a marker (DYS 442 = 12) that none of the other men in the Ewing Project have, and this confirms Tennis' suspicions.

Now, we have had another 'non-Ewing' join the project, a man named Hodges. Unlike Tennis, he did not have a family story that included any potential Ewing ancestors. He was trying to overcome a genealogical brick wall by getting Y-DNA testing with the Hodges Surname Y-DNA Project. To his surprise, the only Hodges he matched was a known close relative of his, but they matched quite a number of Ewings. It turns out that he is only genetic distance two from the Ewing 37-marker modal. I am hoping he will write a detailed article about this for the *Journal*, but the short story is that Mr. Hodges' second great-grandfather, Thomas Jefferson Hodges, and his older brother, William Brown Hodges, were probably born in Pike County, Illinois. A family story says that they were orphaned before they were five years-old and it is thought that they were adopted by John and Rachael Hodges. The best candidate in the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project for a close relative of Mr. Hodges is William Elijah Ewing (WE3); they share the marker $DYS\ 464d = 16$, which no one else in the project has. I am sure he would appreciate hearing from any of you who have ideas about this. If you will contact me, I will put you in touch with him.

Moments ago (as I write this on October 12th), I just learned of a man named Young, who is only genetic distance 3 on the 67-marker panel from my own haplotype. He has agreed to join the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project and I have begun trying to persuade him to share his story with us in a future *Journal* article. I should remark that sometimes we encounter 'Young' as an orthographical variant of 'Ewing' in old records. However, it is doubtful that this explains the Y-DNA match in this case because his grandmother changed his father's surname to her maiden name after she divorced his grandfather.

Finally, we now also have results on the new Ewan man (EW) I spoke about in my last article. We already have 12-marker results on another Ewan man (Ewan), who is in haplogroup I and exactly matches J. David Ewing (JD) on 12 markers, but we do not have more results on him. The new Ewan man also tested for only 12 markers, but this turns out to be enough to show that he is not related to JD, Ewan or anyone else in the project. He is in Group 8, which means he is in haplogroup R1b, but he is no closer than genetic distance four (on only 12 markers) to any of the other men in this group. This is way too far to adduce a relationship in genealogic time.

67-marker Update

What about all those 67-marker upgrades? In general, the more markers one tests, the more information one gets. But you may recall that we have recommended against any more members of the closely-related group spending the extra \$100 it takes to have markers 38-67 tested. It is not impossible

that if we had 67-marker results on every man in the closely-related group, we could find a branch marker or two, but the fact is that we have not learned much from the 67-marker results we have so far obtained on thirteen men in the closely-related group. All but three of these exactly match the R1b1b2e modal at all thirty of the additional markers. The three men that do not match the modal all happen to be in Group 5 (JL, JT and TNS) and they have one mutation each at different markers. This gives the three of them something to watch for when looking for related individuals in the future, but finding only three mutations in 390 (13 x 30) tries does not strike me as a very good return on the \$1300 investment.¹ The reason for the scarcity of mutations in markers 38-67 is that the average mutation rate in this panel is slow compared to the other panels, particularly markers 26-37, and the time since the common ancestor of the men in the closely related group is relatively short (we think maybe on the order of four hundred years or so).

So what good are the extra markers? Again: In general, the more markers one tests, the more information one gets. The Ewing men who are not in the closely-related group may reasonably be looking for information about deeper ancestry, extending back to or beyond the time that surnames came into use. For example, two of the men who have upgraded to 67 markers are WM and HN in Group 9. Not surprisingly, since their common ancestor was born in 1694, they exactly match one another on all thirty of the extra markers (as a result, we will now recommend that it is not necessary for more members of Group 9 to get this testing). But what is interesting is that they have a so-called 'null' DYS 425, which is to say that DYS 425 did not show up at all on the assay.² This is a finding that has been associated with men in haplogroup I2b1a1. We think that this haplogroup has been in Britain for a very long time, perhaps long antedating the R1b haplogroup and certainly antedating any Celtic incursions into Britain. Some have suggested that the makers of Stonehenge may have been members of this haplogroup. Genealogy, it is not, but I find this sort of stuff really fascinating.

We also now have 67-marker results on three of the men in Group 6: DS, DH and WE2. If you take a look at the Group 6 Relationship Diagram on the web site, you will see that WE2 is one of three men in Group 6 known to be descended from William Ewing born c1730. DH and DS are not known by conventional genealogy to be connected to these three, but the 37-marker haplotype of DH exactly matches WE2 and that of DS is genetic distance 3 from them. DH and WE2 also exactly match on markers 38-67; DS differs from them at one of the markers. This reinforces our idea that DH and WE2 are more closely related to one another than to DS. Indeed, it adds support to our impression that DH may also be descended from William Ewing born c1730.

¹ On the other hand, all three of these mutations are found among the five men in Group 5 that have the 67-marker upgrade, and this is a more promising ratio. Recall that the men in Group 5, Part 2 (including JL and JT) are in Group 5 by virtue of the fact that they share DYS 391 = 10, but we do not know the conventional genealogic connections among them. If another man in Group 5, Part 2 should match either JL or JT at the off-modal marker, this would argue strongly for a relationship. It would also be interesting to know whether the other men in Group 5, Part 1 share the off-modal marker that TNS has, because this might end up being a more robust branch marker for this sub-group than the CDYa/b values we have identified. Perhaps we should reconsider whether the upgrade to 67-markers might be helpful in both parts of Group 5.

² This is thought to result from an SNP in the primer region of DYS 425 that renders it undetectable in the assay. By coincidence, this is the SNP that defines I2b1a1. There is really very little doubt that this is the case for our Group 9 men, but to confirm it unequivocally, one of them would have to order deep clade testing for this specific SNP.

I have not taken the time to do this myself, but men in Group 8 (and even Group 6) who have had 67 markers tested could go to YSearch³ and some of the other public databases and see if they can find close matches to men with other surnames that might give a hint about ancient regional connections and could even turn up evidence for a more recent 'non-paternal event'⁴ that would be of genealogical interest.

DYF399X Update

We are still fooling around with DYF399X, trying to see if we can shed any light on the branch structure in the large closely-related group of Ewings with this rapidly mutating set of markers.⁵ Jill Ewing Spitler came to me with a pretty good question at the gathering. Jill is in the same line as the five project participants in Ewing Group 7; WC is her brother. She showed me that the haplotypes of this Group actually match the descendants of John Ewing of Carnashannagh (Group 4) better than the descendants of Pocahontas James, and she wanted to know why her ancestor James (born c1720/25) could not be the son of John of Carnashannagh rather than Pocahontas James (born 1721). Jill pointed out that on the basis of the Y-DNA evidence, her ancestor is at least as good a candidate to be a son of John of Carnashannagh as Pocahontas James.⁶ Jill and I have further discussed this, and she has written an article about her ideas, which appears on page 10 of this issue of the *Journal*.

My initial reaction to Jill's question was to say that this is a matter for conventional genealogy as the Y-DNA evidence does not significantly favor one hypothesis over the other. The fact is that the conventional evidence linking Pocahontas James to John of Carnashannagh is tenuous at best, and does not rule out the possibility that Pocahontas James has been mistaken for James (born c1720/25). Of course, there is no conventional evidence for a connection between James (born c1720/25) and John of Carnashannagh, either. We do not even have proof certain that John of Carnashannagh had any son named James, as far as I know. I think all of this is true, as far as it goes.

Then it occurred to me that DYF399X might give us something to think about in this case. One of the interesting DYF399X findings to date is that all of the Group 4 and Group 7 men that have been tested have 25c at the middle DYF399X locus and only one of the men not in these Groups has the same value. But we have DYF399X results so far on only one of the descendants (RD) of Pocahontas James, and though he has 25c, we cannot make too much of the results on just one man. I put out a call for more of the descendants of Pocahontas James to get tested for DYF399X. Two of them (BE and WK) have stepped up to the plate, and their results are pending. In addition, Jill has ordered DYF399X for her brother (WC).

Perhaps you can see where this is going. If all or almost all of Group 7 matches the other John of Carnashannagh descendants and the Pocahontas James descendants do not, then this would be Y-

³ www.ysearch.org

⁴ This unfortunate term is used when the surname of an individual does not match the surname of his paternal biological line, such as happens in cases of adoption, illegitimacy, and a host of other circumstances.

⁵ I discussed the rationale for this test in some detail in DNA Article 14, under the heading "Differentiating Closely Related Families." Also, 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.

⁶ You will perhaps recall that the descendants of Pocahontas James all share the marker YCA-IIb = 22, which none of the other descendants of John of Carnashannagh have and none of the men in Group 7 have.

DNA evidence that the Group 7 progenitor is more likely to have been a son of John of Carnashannagh than Pocahontas James. Proof? Nope. Just evidence.

Remember: If DYF399X is worth anything at all, it is worth something only to the members of the closely-related Ewings in Groups 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7. Even though the test only costs \$25, we do not recommend it to members of the other Groups. (We do recommend it to members of Group 5, Part 1, on which we do not yet have any DYF399X results – hint, hint.)

Some R1b1b2e Haplotypes not in the Closely Related Group – Correction

In my last article, I mentioned that I thought a known relative of EL had joined the project and was awaiting results. I was speaking about HM, but I was mistaken. HM is actually known to be a relative of TD, and the results we have on him now bear this out. Have a look at the chart below. It won't compare exactly with the one in my last article because I had to leave out another couple of columns of identical data to make it fit on the page, and I corrected one error of shading, but you cannot see the shading well enough to bother with in the black and white version of the chart in the *Journal*.

ID	D Y S 3 9 3	D Y S 3 9 0	D Y S 1 9 /	...	D Y S 3 8 5 b	...	D Y S 4 3 9	...	D Y S 5 8	D Y S 4 9 a	D Y S 5 5 b	D Y S 5 5 5	D Y S 4 4 4	D Y S 5 4 7	D Y S 4 3 7	D Y S 4 4 8	D Y S 4 4 9	D Y S 4 4 4	D Y S 6 6 a	D Y S 6 6 b	D Y S 6 6 c	...	D Y S 5 5 6	D Y S 6 0 7	D Y S 5 7 6	...	C D Y a	C D Y b	D Y S 4 4 2
Ewing	13	25	15		13	13	17	9	10	11	11	25	15	18	31	15	16	16		18	16	18		37	38	11			
UiN	13	24	14		13	12	17	9	10	11	11	25	15	18	30	15	16	16		17	16	18		38	39	12			
TD	13	25	14		13	12	18	9	10	10	11	25	15	18	30	15	16	16		16	16	19		37	38	12			
HM	13	25	14		14	12	18	9	10	10	11	25	15	18	30	15	16	16		16	16	20		38	38	12			
EL	13	25	14		13	12	17	9	10	11	11	24	15	18	30	15	16	17		16	16	17		37	38	12			

Remember that though these men are in haplogroup R1b1b2e, they are not in the group of closely-related Ewings. Why do I say this? Well, look at the chart above. Mutation shading is with respect to the Ewing modal. You will notice that all three of these men match the UiN modal (my shorthand for the R1b1b2e modal) at four places where the Ewing modal does not match the UiN modal, and (except for the CDY markers) only at DYS 390 do they match the Ewing modal rather than the UiN modal. Another way to say this is that they are closer to the UiN modal than they are to the Ewing modal, which is out on a branch of its own.⁷ You can see that TD and HM are at genetic distance 3 from one another, which is entirely consistent with their conventional relationship, and that they match at four places that EL is different from them and each of them has another couple of differences from EL. This pretty well rules out a relationship between them and EL in genealogic time.

⁷ You will be able to see this graphically if you will go to the Network Diagrams on the project's web site at www.ClanEwing.org/DNA_Project/index_Y-DNA.html.

One very interesting result that we may never get to the bottom of is that it turns out that EL is a very close match for the McLaughlin modal. The Ewings lived very close to the McLaughlins in Donegal during the 17th and early 18th centuries, and it would not be too much of a stretch to speculate that there may have been an unrecorded adoption or some other sort of 'non-paternal event' resulting in a Ewing with McLaughlin DNA. It is also intriguing to speculate about the old claim that McEwan became a sept of McLaughlin after Clan McEwan was broken. I am afraid that both of these possibilities are well beyond the reach of conventional documentation.

Markers That Distinguish the Ewing Modal from the R1b1b2e Modal

This might be a good place to speak again about the markers that distinguish the Ewing modal from the modal of the R1b1b2e haplogroup to which it belongs. There is some controversy about when the most recent common ancestor of haplogroup R1b1b2e lived, but the latest thinking is that this was about 1,200 years ago. It is not known where he lived, but since the greatest density of members of this haplogroup is found today in northwestern Ireland, some have argued that this is where he lived.

The Ewing modal haplotype differs from the R1b1b2e modal at seven markers. Two of these are CDYa/b, which are so rapidly mutating that they do not have much value in addressing remote ancestry because of the frequency of back and parallel mutations, so I have not included them in this discussion. The others are DYS 19, 439, 449, 456 and 442.

	DYS	19	439	449	456	442
mutation rate		0.00151	0.00477	0.00838	0.00735	0.00324
R1b1b2e modal		14	12	30	17	12
Ewing modal		15	13	31	18	11
# Ewings not matching Ewing modal		0	10	3	3	2
% Ewings on YSearch*		29%	?	13.3%	23.5%	36%

*test described in text

DYS 19 and DYS 442 are the most slowly mutating of these, and they are also the most specific for identifying Ewings. A couple of years ago, I did the experiment of choosing a seven-marker subset of the R1b1b2e modal, adding these off-modal Ewing markers to it one at a time, and seeing what I could turn up on YSearch.⁸ When I added DYS 19 = 15, I found thirty-one matches, nine of whom (29%) were Ewings. When I added DYS 442 = 11, I found twenty-five matches, nine of whom (36%) were Ewings. The corresponding figures for DYS 456 and 449 were 23.5% and 13.3%, respectively. I did not do the test for DYS 439 = 13 for some reason, perhaps because ten of our participants do not match the Ewing modal at that marker. I do not recall how many of our project participants had uploaded their data to YSearch at that time, but even now less than a third of them have done so, so I do not think we were terribly over-represented in YSearch. I also did not keep notes about what happened when I included two of the off-modal markers in a search, but my recollection is that doing so turned up 100% Ewings.

⁸ I used seven markers because the fewest markers YSearch allows for a search is eight, and I wanted to cast as wide a net as possible. The markers I used were DYS 393, 390, 385a/b, 392, 448 & 607.

If some mathematically inclined individual is still reading at this point, please get in touch with me, because I would very much like to have some help in following this line of thinking in a more rigorous and controlled way.

I also think that we have enough data now to do some TMRCA (time to most recent ancestor) calculations based on marker variance that will have narrow enough confidence intervals to be very interesting, but I am not sure how to handle the fact that we have subsets in some of our groups that have a much more recent MRCA than the overall group MRCA. I could really use a math playmate.

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 project's web site⁹ and the FTDNA web site.¹⁰ If you have questions, call me at +1 505.764.8704, in the evening, or EMail me at 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.

Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project Participants Sought

Tammy Mitchell (*info at DowntownInteractive dot com*) is seeking help in supporting the Y-DNA testing of a male in her Canadian Ewing family that she feels is possibly related to participant JM2 in the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project. Jane Gilbert (*hokiejane at yahoo dot com*) has a standing offer to pay for Y-DNA testing of men who can satisfy her that they are descended from James Ewing of Inch through his son John born 1698/99. William E. Riddle (*Riddle at WmERiddle dot com*) is similarly willing to support the Y-DNA testing of descendants of James of Inch's grandson Squire James (a son of Alexander) who married Mary McKown.

⁹ www.clanewing.org/DNA_Project/index_Y-DNA.html

¹⁰ www.familytreedna.com/public/Ewing