Varner Family Genealogy

This is the first in what I hope will be a long line of Varner and associated family genealogy updates. At this point I can only commit to a few issues yearly. Much will depend on my available time and helpful submissions from others with information. These updates are an attempt to provoke responses. Please provide you input and feedback.

Below is a link to where I have placed the PowerPoint slideshows and associated information I used during the presentation at the Varner-Williams Reunion on May 25, 2013. Remember that files are being updated/changed as new information surfaces.

http://BruceVarner.com/VarnerGenealogy.htm

DNA TESTING INFORMATION

Several individuals have asked about the process to submit DNA samples for testing. There are several companies that do such testing. Below is the company I used and the reasons for my choice.

Family Tree DNA. From my investigation before submitting, this one seems to have the largest database. Below are the links to information specific to the process.

http://www.familytreedna.com/
(Main web page)
http://www.familytreedna.com/projects.aspx
(A page about all the surname projects available to join)
http://www.familytreedna.com/faq/
(General Frequently Asked Questions)
http://www.familytreedna.com/products.aspx
(Prices. They do have specials so if you keep watch closely you can often get a reduced price)

I would suggest the Y67 DNA test or higher. The other less detailed tests do not provide sufficient evidence to parse out where close relatives might match together. It is more expensive but seems to answer more questions. The more markers, the better you can eliminate distant or medium distant relatives from close relatives.

WHY WE NEED DNA FOR GENEALOGY

Using my DNA results as an example, to date at a 67 marker comparison, I match 4 individuals who have submitted DNA to within 2 markers.

0 Deviation – I have one match at 67 markers where markers do not vary at all, zero deviation. That means that genes have not mutated. Very close relative.
1 Deviation – I have two matches at 67 markers where we vary one deviations. This means that genes in only one marker have changed since the point where are ancestors merged.
2 Deviation – I have one match at 67 markers where we vary by two deviations. This means that genes in two markers have changed since the point where are ancestors merged.

It is important to understand that these matches only apply at 67 markers. When compared at the next fewer amount of markers that can be tested, I would have several additional seemingly close matches. This is because a fewer number of markers are used (Y37 compared to Y67) to make the comparison and therefore 20 fewer markers are even used. This is why the higher the marker options purchased and tested, the more likely you are to determine close matches.

All this is still only useful if you have someone to compare to. As an example, as far as I know I am the only male to male descendant of Nancy Ann Varner (1841-1934) who has submitted DNA for testing. So while I was able to find out through DNA testing that the father of Nancy Ann's child John Lawrence Varner (1866-1951) was in fact a Riggs, we still do not know if any of the other siblings were also fathered by a Riggs. We also do not have second and third DNA tests from the same line(s) which can possibly further narrow family lineage.

MRCA (**M**ost **R**ecent **C**ommon **A**ncestor) is a term used to describe the nearest relative that two zero or very near zero deviation DNA contributors had in common. This designation does not mean that this is in fact the most recent common ancestor, just that the common ancestor occurred at or before this MRCA relative. In my case the MRCA with my 0 deviation match, based upon statistical probabilities, was 5 generations back. Additional investigations so far indicate that my common Riggs ancestor is in fact 5 generations back. This is with the current DNA samples available. If/when I am able to get other Varner's and other closer Riggs male to male descendants to contribute DNA samples, a closer relative connection can possibly be validated. This is not to say that the Riggs connection is not conclusive. It is only to say that as of now, only other general genealogy evidence can be used to conclude a closer Riggs connection then 5 generations.

DNA rules are very detailed and not understood easily. I am absolutely not an expert. The above details have only been studied in order to understand my specific DNA circumstances.

If you have ever considered submitting for DNA, please go ahead and do it! If nothing else, your descendants will thank you later!!!!!

Females submitting for DNA testing must be sure to understand the limitations. Female samples do not help in surname paths as women traditionally take the man's surname. So a female DNA sample would trace mother to grandmother to great grandmother and so on, NOT up through the fathers side……..

VARNER RIGGS CONNECTION

As presented at the family reunion in May, I have found evidence that to my satisfaction allows a conclusion that Edmund Riggs (1819-1877) is in fact the father of John Lawrence Varner (1866-1951). *(Please see the link to the PowerPoint slideshow on page 1)* I will not go over the details again here but want to address a question asked several times since the presentation.

Often asked is "could it be one of his sons" or another Riggs in the Miller County area that was John Lawrence's father? The answer at this point is absolutely yes! I have concluded that it was in fact Edmund however because of evidence linking Nancy and Edmund, and a complete lack of any evidence associating any of the other Riggs to Nancy. That is my conclusion. Does not mean it is correct. Future DNA evidence and/or future documented discoveries could change that conclusion and possibly shed light on the other siblings as well. As stated before, I choose to go where the evidence leads rather than waiting to see if every possible alternative excluded.

Dee Bremer primarily, and as I have time…. have been working to located descendants of Riggs family members who lived in Miller County at that time. And an approach is being discussed on how to first discuss this with those descendants. (It might not be good to ring up a Riggs and say "Hi, I am your long lost illegitimate relative!")

Clarification! Wanted to clarify what the documentation actually says that links Nancy Varner with Edmund Riggs. The paper in the Edmunds Riggs probate file says that Nancy Varner was owed money from the estate as she worked to Edmund and had not been fully paid. There is nothing saying that Nancy worked as a domestic nor where Nancy did this work. The assumption is that Nancy may have served as a domestic for Edmund because Nancy had apparently served in such a capacity in the past for John Denton (1860 census).

FAMILY TREES

I do not have a family tree on the web. It is instantly copied by others and added to their trees. Most times when I have contacted persons who have placed a family tree on Ancestry or other sites and ask if they have references/evidence to their published family connections the answer

is no. The indication is usually that the info was obtained from another family member. Even if the referenced family member is contacted their answer is also that they in turn obtained the information from another person but they do not recall who. To me I then have to then assume that all the information is suspect.

NANCY ANN VARNER'S CHILDREN'S BIRTH PLACE

A questions surfaced: "are all the children of Nancy Ann Varner born in Miller County?" Evidence seems to point to yes, all were born in Miller County. Nancy was in the 1860 census living in Miller County. Nancy does not appear in the 1870 census. A letter for Nancy is noted in an 1875 issue of the Miller Co. Vidette. She then reappears in the 1880 census again in Miller County. The only thing of which I am aware that contradicts this is the daughter Mary F. death certificate which indicates a birth county of Dallas in Missouri. Mary was born 1877. Nancy had a letter waiting in Miller County post office in 1875 and appeared in Miller County census in 1880. No other documentation is known to indicate Nancy and children moved into Dallas County during that time. So it would seem that the Mary F. death certificate contains inaccurate information. Certainly not the only death certificate to have wrong or misleading information in it.

GEORGE VARNER (c. 1789-c. 1861)
MILITARY HISTORY

History is very interesting. One of the exciting benefits of the newly discovered information about George Varner is his military service. As indicate during the reunion presentation, George served in the regular US Infantry between 1810-1815. George again served in the Seminole War in 1818 before coming to Missouri. This information makes historical events occurring during that timeframe all the more relevant. Here are some links and other details about history that George Varner appears to have participated in.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creek_War
George enlisted near the western Georgia frontier in 1810. The 2nd US Infantry served on the Georgia frontier during this time. The 2nd US Infantry participated in the Creek War. Though specific records of the regiment during this timeframe have not been found it seems logical that George would have in some way participated in these actions.

http://www.exploresouthernhistory.com/fortbowyer.html
George was part of the 2nd US Infantry all during the War of 1812. George was under the command of Andrew Jackson and George's regimental officer was Major Lawrence. The troops under Major Lawrence staffed and took part in two battles during the war at Ft. Bowyer in

Mobile bay. Though specific records of George's location during this timeframe have not been found it seems logical that George would have participated in these actions.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seminole_Wars
George enlisted during 1818 to take part in the 1st Simonole War in southern Georgia and northern Florida. Again under Andrew Jackson. Though specific records of George's unit location during this timeframe have not been found it seems logical that George would have participated in these actions.

Clarification! George Varner served under General Andrew Jackson during the War of 1812. It is assumed however that George did NOT participate in the Battle of New Orleans. His unit under a Major Lawrence was assigned to Ft. Bowyer in Mobile Bay and it would seem likely that George served there during this timeframe.

Please let me know of topics that interest you, family history details that you may have, or questions about Varner and related genealogy you have. I will attempt to include any received in future issues.

Bruce Varner