
News, Updates, & More



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FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

You will find copies of this newsletter and more genealogy information downloadable from the Varner Family website.

<http://brucevarner.com/VarnerGenealogy.htm>

Please provide any ideas you may have to future newsletters. I need to have the input of others so that all different subjects and different perspectives are addressed.

*Information will be forthcoming in this and future issues of this newsletter about the Bill Varner DNA results and what it means. The results are back and there is much new information resulting from this DNA testing. I do not want to spring the whole thing at once. Also, the information is so new, that I want to have some time to sort through the data and be sure I am presenting it accurately and correctly. So please have patience.

QUESTIONS / NEWS

Q) We haven't had any new information from the Riggs connection in some time. Anything new occurring?

A) Not much at the moment. I have been so busy with the Billy Joe Varner DNA testing that I have not pursued the Riggs leads in a while. The main goals on that front currently are:

1. Identifying and locating living Riggs relatives in the Washington/Oregon area.
2. Keeping track of advances in Riggs family research being tracked by Alvy Smith.
3. Trying to obtain some additional Riggs data about our Missouri line.

As a refresher, it is the Riggs line in Miller County, Missouri who fathered the two males and likely all four of Nancy Ann Varner's children. That Riggs line descended from a Riggs family who first came to Virginia (Now West Virginia). Three Riggs brothers that family migrated from what is now West Virginia to Miller County, Missouri.

DNA testing has proven that all male descendants of Nancy Ann Varner are DNA descendant from one of these Riggs brothers. The strongest connection and the most likely brother is Edmund Riggs. You can find detailed information about Edmund on the website.

This Riggs family has a long genealogical history and is well documented. Our DNA confirms that the Riggs brothers of Miller County, Missouri and we Varner's descended from Nancy Ann genetically belong to that Riggs family. Further background about that history is also available on the website.

Unfortunately, the three brothers apparently became severed from the rest of the Riggs family lines outside of Missouri. The known Riggs surnamed descendants from the brothers, moved west into Washington and Oregon. That much is known. However in those states, no one of the Riggs surname has been identified as being descendants of the Missouri Riggs brothers.

Evidence found indicates that only Edmund had any male children surnamed Riggs. Those male children of Edmund's were: Owen Roby Riggs b. 1848, Okey Riggs b. 1852, James Carroll Riggs b. 1855, and William H. Riggs b. 1859.

Okey and James both had male children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Living Missouri Riggs descendants have so far eluded the search.

So, finding genealogical data on our Riggs ancestors for several generations back is relatively easy. Alvy Smith has reams of data on his website. Finding direct descendants however is proving to be more difficult. But the search continues.

George Varner of Missouri Direct Line DNA

****DNA Results Received****

The Family Tree DNA results for the sample obtained from Billy Joe Varner have been completed!

I know how anxious everyone is to hear about this information. Some of the results will have to wait until the next newsletter however. I am very sorry for that, but the results were only obtained recently. As is always be counted on with the Varner's, the results were totally different than expected!

Therefore I want to be able to fully study every aspect, both to totally understand them, and to ensure I provide only correct, accurate information. For that reason the results provided in this newsletter will be only partially revealed. Again, I am sorry. I believe however that there will be more than enough passed on in this newsletter to keep everyone busy coming up-to-speed with the details being provided this month.

Majority of the readers of this newsletter are descendants through Nancy Ann Varner. Remember that the DNA results obtained from Billy Joe Varner's testing provide answers for George Varner of Missouri's direct male to male line. NOT for males descended from Nancy Ann who are in fact genetically Riggs.....

From a high level, Bill Varner's testing results produced the following high level conclusions:

- Our George Varner of Missouri male line does NOT genetically match those Varner's that have been past DNA tested from Oglethorpe County, Georgia.
- So far Billy Joe Varner's DNA test is a close match to only one person in all of the current Family Tree DNA database. That person is William V. Varner.
- The genetic makeup of Billy Joe Varner & William V.'s DNA, and therefore George Varner of Missouri's DNA, is a highly unusual genetic code that is only found in 2%-5% of the entire world population! This makes it the subject of more interest and study than might otherwise be the case.

Those details about our George Varner of Missouri's connection to Oglethorpe County, Georgia and where in fact the genetic match comes from will be postponed until the next newsletter. By the December newsletter I will have all the facts as fully vetted as possible. Sorry, sorry, sorry!

From this new information we have three new members receiving the newsletter for the first time. They are

relatives newly discovered as a result of these most recent tests.

First is **William V. Varner**. William is the DNA donor who matches at 1 deviation our Billy Joe Varner.

Next is **Cheryl Varner Walker**. Cheryl is William V.'s daughter and tracks her father's DNA results and her own DNA results in Family Tree. She lives in Oklahoma City.

Also, Cheryl sent me the email address of her cousin **Ken Markham**. Ken also has interests in our family genealogy.

Please welcome these new cousins!!!
We are happy to have you!

Today I will address only the third point. How our "Varner" DNA is unusual. The rest of this newsletter will explain how this makes our Varner family so different.

The George Varner of Missouri line belongs to a DNA Haplogroup that is found in less than 5% of the world population! The Haplogroup is also concentrated in large numbers in only a few spots throughout the world. This makes it easier to trace and reach some general assumptions. Have you ever heard of "Otzi the Iceman"? He is a Varner relative. Read on!

Billy Joe Varner has DNA that is identified as Haplogroup G-M201. This G-M201 grouping is what identifies the

George Varner of Missouri male ancestors and descendants as belonging to the above described small segment of the population.

The following information is rather detailed. Please read however, as it is important in understanding the believed migration path that peoples with the G genetic identifier followed in early history.

The G genetic identifier is believed to have first appeared nearly 48,000 years ago. The man in whose Y chromosome G (M201) genetic mutation first arose, is thought to have lived in south-west Asia about 40,000 years ago.¹

The G identifier is concentrated in several locations. I have listed below areas where 10% or more of the sampled population is G identifier.² Several other nearby countries have concentrations of G-M201 but are in numbers less than 10%. (The reference to Georgia several time below refers to the Country of Georgia, located just south of Russia. Not the US state.)

86.7% - Kazakhstan (G Identifier)
↓ - Ossetia, Russia (G-M201 Identifier)
30% Georgia (G-M201 Identifier)
18% Azerbaijan (G Identifier)
15.2% Iran (G Identifier)
13.5% Southern Moldova (G Identifier)

¹ Anthony Adolph
<http://anthonyadolph.co.uk/adolph-and-haplogroup-g-genealogy/>

² Based upon location sampling of DNA

13.3% Cyprus (G Identifier)
 12% Northern Portugal (G Identifier)
 11.8% Island of Corsica (G Identifier)
 11% Armenia (G Identifier)
 10.9% Island of Crete (G Identifier)
 10.7% Italy (G Identifier)
 10% Israel (Majority Palestinian)

↑**The Republic of North Ossetia-Alania** is located in and around the Caucasus Mountains and has been part of Russia since the 1700's. This is the mountain range that separates Russia and Georgia. It separates Asia from Europe. And it is along one of the main silk road routes between China and the west. Sochi, Russia where the 2014 winter Olympics recently occurred, sits on the Black Sea at the northwestern end of the Caucasus Mountains. In this area of Russia and in the country of Georgia to the south, is where our G-M201 genetic markers are most plentiful.

The below numbers involve those peoples on the north side (Russian side) of the Caucasus and represent the percentage of males with the same G-M201 genetic mark as the George Varner of Missouri clan. This represents the Varner families link to the general G-M201 DNA pattern of distribution. Our ancient history ancestors are very concentrated here.

Percentage of currently living males in this area that have G-M201 DNA---

Republic of (North) Ossetia [Russia]

Alagir	75%
Digora	74%

NW Caucasus People (Not in Ossetia)

Shapsug	81%
Circassians	31%
Adyghe	48%

NE Caucasus People (Not in Ossetia)

Avars	12%
Chechen	6%
Ingush	27%
Terek Cossacks	54%

In Russia as a whole, the population of the G Haplogroup is very low at under 1%, so this Varner marker is very concentrated in the Caucasus Mountain region of Russia.

Geneticists and linguistics experts have followed this genetic marker specifically because of its localization. The language experts identified the Ossetic language (Which is still spoken today in 3 dialects) as belonging to the Scythian group of the Iranian, Indo-European family of languages.³

What this means is that when the experts follow the trail of language distribution, they can predict the general migration of the language and therefore the distribution. When combined with the findings of genetics scientists, the most likely migration patterns are further refined.

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ossetian_language

Now to place all the above in plain English. It would appear the experts believe that our very early ancestors likely followed this path.

- The G identifier would have likely first appeared in or around what is now Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan has the densest population of G identifier in the world. So far genetic testing reveals that everyone tested as Haplogroup G, is also a M201 mutation.
- Males with G-M201 marker likely migrated from Kazakhstan area, south & west through what is now Iran where the current spoken language of those in Ossetia was derived.
- Migration continued along the silk routes into the Caucasus region.
- From the region of the Caucasus Mountains, through western Europe and coastal northern Africa, settling in specific areas in larger numbers.

How did are more recent ancestors get to their current locations? Having pockets of concentrated G-M201 ancestors meant that many ancestors remained in localized areas. It becomes more complicated as smaller numbers of G-M201 ancestors continued migration resulted in intermarriage with other groups and in other parts of the world. This results in this marker only being

found in smaller numbers around the world.

At the end of this newsletter is a map that shows the invasions of Europe by the Germanic tribes during the middle ages. Historians say many G-M201 males from Ossetia accompanied those Germanic invaders. It is interesting to note the concentration of G-M201 markers, in current populations, in some of the same areas that were plundered by those Germanic tribes during that time period. Those other smaller places of concentrating include: Turkey, Austria-Hungary, Southern Portugal, and the Islands of Corsica and Crete.

Now on to "Otzi the Iceman". I am sure your remember the news. In 1991, on the slopes of the Otztal Alps between Austria and Italy, near South Tyrol, Italy. Hikers found the frozen body of a 5,300 year old male corpse in the mountain meltwater. This mummy became a sensation worldwide for his level of preservation and age. He was named Otzi. Otzi has the G-M201 genetic marker!⁴

Further, this is one of those areas in Europe where there is today a living concentration of G-M201 males in Austria very near where Ice Man was found.

The full story of the iceman can be read here: <http://www.iceman.it/en/> or from

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haplogroup_G-M201

the National Geographic Society here:
<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2007/07/iceman/hall-text>

I am planning on putting together a more detailed reference of the G-M201 DNA story in the future, to be placed on the website.

There is a G-PF3146 Y-DNA project at Family Tree DNA which studies those testers who fall into the G-M201 category. I have joined that group for Billy Joe Varner. Interaction with the administrators brought to light three SNP tests that the group believes should be conducted with Billy Joe's DNA. Those tests are the L91 SNP, the M201 SNP, and the PF3146 SNP. I have submitted for those tests which can be done with the existing DNA sample and will pass along the results when testing is completed.

DNA SNP's provide a narrowing of the genealogical line. Each SNP is a mutation of which there are hundreds. The results should provide more specific detail about what sub-line the Varner DNA falls.

With the information already gathered on the G-M201 Haplogroup, plus the new information coming to light every day as new people submit to testing, more and more detailed information will become available.

Next month comes the information about the new to us, William V. Varner line, and guesses as to how our George Varner of Missouri line fits together with that information. Happy hunting!

Don't forget to see the background images on the following page!

I think the question is going to come up as to whether one DNA test is enough to ensure that we are following the correct family.

I do feel that there would be benefit to having a second male to male descendant of George Varner tested.

For me it is just too coincidental that the DNA test resulted in only one close match and that one match was also a Varner.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving.....

Bruce Varner



*Yellow represents areas with concentrations of G-M201 males. Red represents paths taken by the Germanic tribes westward. In 406 AD the Vandals crossed the Rhine River. They were accompanied by migrating Alans. Alans was the name given early Ossetians who came from, and still occupy the Caucasus Mountain region. The route of migration clearly shows that some settled in areas they passed. It is easy to imagine how these migrating Ossetians became ever more intermingled over wide spread areas during the subsequent centuries. Even ending up in America and in Missouri with the name of George Varner. Below is a more current map of the same general area for reference:

