News, Updates, & More

Varner Family Genealogy

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May 2018

FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

Prior newsletters and other family genealogy information can be found on the Varner Family website.
http://brucevarner.com/VarnerGenealogy.htm

****FINAL REMINDER****
2018 Varner/Newton/Williams Reunion

2018 reunion is scheduled for this month! Saturday, May 26th, 2018, in Macks Creek:

Macks Creek Baptist Church
Fellowship Hall
Macks Creek, MO. 65786

Opening at 10:00am! People often begin to leave the event about 3:00pm. Hope to see everyone!

This month's newsletter is devoted to DNA testing. I cannot overstate the progress that genealogy is making, right in our own families. Even if you personally do not wish to devote the

time to genealogy, others in your family do. Other descendants in the future will. It is too late once you are gone.

QUESTIONS / NEWS

Q: Linda Cushman wrote- …was Emily Piles the sister of Phillip Berry or Rachel Jenkins Newton Berry? We have no record of Phillip and Rachel having a daughter named Emily. Their daughter was Mary and she married Wylie Gott.

A: Linda, I do not know. I have never really had a detailed lineage for either family. Let me throw this out to the group.

If anyone has the family lineage for the Piles or the Berry's, please forward it to me. That way I can pass it on in next month's newsletter. Thanks!

George Varner of Missouri Direct Line DNA

Received the autosomal DNA results back on Janice Varner Ortner. A member of the Dallas County Varner's. It looks like she will have some good leads to pursue in her quest to know more about her family genealogy.

The bad news is that it appears that, as strange as it may seem, the Dallas County Varner line is NOT related to our Varner family.

An initial study of her results revealed no common matches to any of our George Varner of Missouri family lines. Or to any of our standard associated surnames. She had some second to fifth cousin autosomal matches to people who had the Varner surname in their family. Every single one of those Varner's however were from a Varner line that came from far eastern counties in Tennessee. Janice's recent Varner line seems to be:

Joseph Abb Varner (????-1860)
Rowan County, Tennessee
  Samuel Alexander Varner (1856-1946) Oklahoma
    Thomas Everett Varner (1887-1963) Dallas Co. MO.
      William Lawrence Varner (1918-2000) Dallas Co. MO.
        Janice Varner (1944-)
        Dallas Co. MO.

There is a match from an apparent descendant to a Phoebe Varner (1795-1860) in Pendleton Co. Virginia, daughter of a John Varner (1772-1822). There is an apparent match for her Varner family that on the surface, seems to connect her Varner's back from eastern Tennessee, into Spartanburg, South Carolina.

These are Varner families that we have known about for many years. It is possible that Janice's line ends up back to a John Adam Varner and Catherine Barbara Sigler line. More study on her part is required.

Riggs/Varner Connection

As a result of my Autosomal testing with AncestryDNA, I have found at least one close match to a male descendant of Edmund Riggs who currently lives in Washington state. This is great because we know that most of Edmund's family move to Washington/Oregon area. I have been looking for descendants of Edmund's from this state! Will provide more details as I have time to research the connection and contact the match.

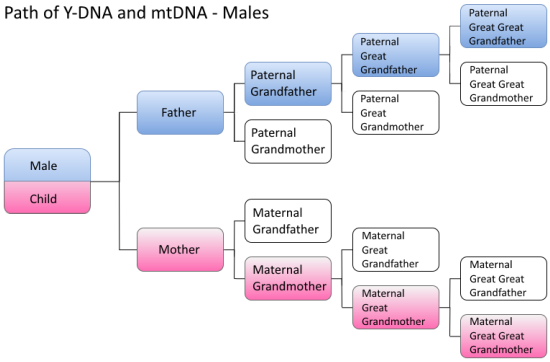
The Value of mtDNA, For Men Also!

Yes, there is value in men taking the mtDNA test. I am surprised also! I feel bad about this one. All this time, and I was not aware of these benefits.

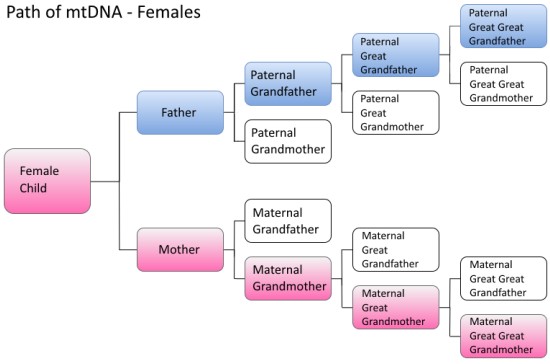
"A mitochondrial DNA test (mtDNA test) traces a person's matrilineal or mother-line ancestry using the DNA in his or her mitochondria. mtDNA is passed down by the mother unchanged, to all her children, both male and female. A mitochondrial DNA test, can therefore be taken by both men and women. If a perfect match is found to another person's mtDNA test results, one may find a common ancestor in the other relative's (matrilineal) 'information table'.[1]"

[1] Copied from the International Society of Genetic Genealogy Wiki
https://isogg.org/wiki/Mitochondrial_DNA_tests

Males inherit mtDNA (shown in pink) from their mother but do not pass it on to their children. Males inherit Y-DNA (shown in blue) from their father. They pass on Y-DNA to their sons but not their daughters.[2]



Females inherit mtDNA (shown in pink) from their mother. They pass on mtDNA to both their male and female children. Females do not inherit Y-DNA (shown in blue) from their father.[3]



So why would a male, or anyone for that matter benefit from the mtDNA test?

The short answer is to fill in blanks. From a genealogy standpoint, societies really would have been much better off

[2] ibid
[3] ibid

if the man took the females surname down through history.

The mtDNA test involves analyzing part of the DNA that is only passed on from the female. It contains results that change very, very little over time. Meaning the direct linage back, from mother to grandmother and so forth, hardly ever changes, even over thousands of years.

The Y-DNA test on the other hand, changes little in the short term, but does randomly change. So while it is accurate, it is not definitive over many generations. An example is our linkage to the Riggs males. With Y-DNA testing we are sure that those children of Nancy Ann Varner were fathered by a Riggs. We are only sure that they were fathered by Edmund Riggs using additional genealogy information, because some Y-DNA changes do occur. That is the reason Warren and I match perfectly through Y-DNA, but some of the other Riggs cousins who have been Y-DNA tested match, but with one or two deviations. Y-DNA randomly changes by small amounts which can add up many generations back.

mtDNA on the other hand likely would not have changed at all over this same period of time.

But society is what it is and we are stuck with it. Now back to why it can be beneficial for anyone to have their mtDNA tested.

Y-DNA can establish the paternal line, but nothing else. So in comes autosomal DNA.

Remember autosomal DNA is passed down from both men and women, to both men and women. Great! But it is not passed down evenly or continuously. You have four grandparents. But you likely do not have their autosomal DNA passed to you evenly from each. Then after about the second generation or so, it get worse. You may not have ANY of a particular ancestors autosomal DNA!

Back to mtDNA. We have established that it passes down from mother to daughter and son basically unchanged. And the daughter continues to pass the mtDNA down to her daughter unchanged. So on, and so on.

This then provides a third method of cross testing to have fill in blanks in a family tree. Let's go over some examples of each.

I did Y-DNA test and established without a doubt that Riggs should have been the surname for all of us males that descend from Nancy Ann Varner.

My sister Pam Varner, just completed mtDNA testing. This is great because now I do not need to myself. Why, because our mother passed the exact same mtDNA to us both. The difference

is that I cannot pass this mtDNA on further. She can.

Dee Hunt Bremer, myself, and several others have completed Autosomal DNA testing, and have been comparing matches of possible cousins. Seeing where some of us match these possible cousins. But remember that as Autosomal is passed down randomly over generations. Therefor even with persons we have established are in fact cousins, some of us match, some of us don't.

Now I have a third method to try and triangulate to help determine if a person is in fact a true cousin.

AncestryDNA or FamilyTree DNA for Autosomal Testing

Please read this full article before reaching a conclusion on which company to use for your Autosomal DNA testing. Each company has its advantages and disadvantages.

I took the plunge and submitted DNA for Autosomal testing via AncestryDNA. Received the results a couple of weeks back, and I am now enjoying studying my matches to a different group of individuals. I hope that what I learned can help others in their decision which company to use.

I did this, even though I had several years ago completed Autosomal DNA testing through FamilyTree DNA, in what they call their Family Finder option.

I did so because there were several things I wanted to understand. Was I missing anything by using FamilyTree DNA instead of AncestryDNA? Were the results different? Were the options better with one company than another? People have asked me these questions and I discovered that I really did not truly understand the differences.

My wife and I have had a subscription in her name at Ancestry.com for many years to search genealogical data. But neither of us had used AncestryDNA, instead using FamilyTree DNA. The reason we started down the path at that company, is because I wanted to do Y-DNA testing. That left out AncestryDNA.

So we both took their Autosomal test. Since our existing Ancestry.com subscription account was in Charlene's name, she purchased and submitted her sample through that account. I created a new account, and submitted my sample. I will try to explain the differences, good and bad between the two companies.

1) The methods for submitting the samples differ. At FamilyTree DNA you use a small toothbrush instrument and scrub the inside of your cheeks. At AncestryDNA you spit several times into a small tube.

2) You basically have to also purchase an Ancestry.com subscription to access many of the capabilities. It makes sense that you are unable to access the normal ancestor research functions without an Ancestry.com subscription. But, you are able to accomplish little from your matches without a subscription! Having said that, you do have the capability to upload DNA results to GedMatch.com, which increases what you can find. So, you need to be sure you understand this before choosing AncestryDNA. If you are going to maintain an Ancestry.com subscription, or you are doing the testing so that others in the family can use the data, this is a moot point.

This was a shocker to me after receiving my AncestryDNA results. I was unable to do much with my results because I had created a new account for my test. Being a new account, they would not let me access my wife's Ancestry.com account. A couple of calls to Ancestry did not help. So now I have to look at my matches in AncestryDNA and then switch to my wife's Ancestry.com account, and hope I can find the same person in the user directory before seeing any pertinent information. I could have avoided this, had I done the test from her account, but I did not know that at the time. Now it is too late as they will not switch the test.

Here is a comparison of what you get doing basic Autosomal testing, from both companies.

With an AncestryDNA Autosomal test you are provided with the following capabilities for the price of testing. Also shown (**In Bold**) are the capabilities only available with a paid Ancestry.com subscription:

- Your Autosomal Matches (Abt. 5 million Database)
- Ethnicity Estimates For You & Your Matches
- Predicted Relationship Between You & Your Matches
- Amount of Shared Centimorgans & Number of Segments With Your Matches
- Ability to Email Your Matches
- Ability to Filter Search Your Matches
- With Every Match, A List of Common Matches Between You Both
- Ability to Download Your DNA Results
- Ability to Take Your DNA Results & Upload Them to GedMatch, Which Provides Matches to Anyone Who Has Uploaded DNA From Any Of the DNA Companies (Obtain: Matches, Predicted Relationships, Shared Centimorgans & Segments, Email to Matches, Chromosome Browser)
- **Ability to See & Search Your Matches Family Tree, If They Have Uploaded One**
- **Ability to Do General Genealogy Research**
- **Tips & Hints For Your Matches & Your Family Tree**

With a FamilyTree DNA Autosomal test you are provided with the following capabilities for the price of testing:

- Your Autosomal Matches (Abt. 850,000 Database)
- Ethnicity Estimates For You & Your Matches
- Predicted Relationship Between You & Your Matches
- Amount of Shared Centimorgans & Number of Segments With Your Matches
- Ability to Email Your Matches
- Ability to Filter Search Your Matches
- With Every Match, A List of Common Matches Between You Both

- Ability to Download Your DNA Results
- Ability to Take Your DNA Results & Upload Them to GedMatch, Which Provides Matches to Anyone Who Has Uploaded DNA From Any Of the DNA Companies (Obtain: Matches, Predicted Relationships, Shared Centimorgans & Segments, Email to Matches, Chromosome Browser)
- With Every Match, A List of our Matches NOT Shared With Another
- Chromosome Browser
- List of Surnames That Each of Your Matches is Researching
- If A Parent Has Also Tested, The Ability to See If A Match Is On Your Mother Or Father's Side
- Ability to See & Search Your Matches Family Tree, If They Have Uploaded One

3) There is a dramatic difference in the number of people who have completed Autosomal testing at the two companies!

FamilyTree DNA has about 850,000 Autosomal tests in their database. AncestryDNA has over 5 million Autosomal tests in their database.

This is a BIG difference, and might be the deciding factor, as you have so many more potential matches.

So, the company you should choose should be based upon several factor, and not an each choice.

Are you just doing an Autosomal test because others in your family need the results for comparison?
Choose AncestryDNA.

Are you never likely to submit for Y-DNA or mtDNA?
Choose AncestryDNA.

Are you interested in Genealogy but will never have an Ancestry.com subscription?
Choose FamilyTree DNA.

Are you just looking to obtain Autosomal DNA so you can upload the results to GedMatch.com?
Choose which ever one is on sale at the time.

Are you really into genealogy, want every possibility, and can afford it?
Choose both & get an Ancestry.com subscription. Remember that is the only way to see results from all who have tested.

The Police and Your DNA

In the last few days it has surfaced that the police have charged an individual in the decades old "Golden State Killer" case in California. What makes this interesting is that the police used familial DNA, found on a regularly used genealogical DNA site to help achieve this goal. This immediately raises the question of how private is your genealogical DNA.

The short answer is that your family Y-DNA it is not private. At least not in the way it was used here.

But before you jump to the conclusion that you should stop using DNA to help with genealogy research, think it through. Doing so would most likely not prevent something similar from happening.

First, the facts. The cold case in question occurred in the 70's and 80's. It involved 12 murders, 51 rapes, and more than 120 burglaries. No likely suspect ever surfaced. DNA was collected from scenes, and over the years compared to DNA in the criminal databases. No matches.

Recently cold case detectives went another route. Trying to find a match using DNA samples taken for genealogic purposes.

Outrageous you say? Not really. Nor can you likely prevent it in the future. Not even by deciding not to have your DNA tested for genealogy purposes, in the first place.

Joseph James Deangelo, the person charged in this case is a former police officer. That is why his DNA was not in the criminal databases. He had never been arrested.

Police had the suspect DNA results from the old crime scenes. They just uploaded that DNA profile, in the correct format, onto GedMatch.com. No, Deangelo had not submitted DNA for genealogy purposes. Not at all. Other Deangelo surname family members had.

So, just like anyone does in their genealogical research, the police compared the suspect DNA and found familial matches. That gave them the likely surname of the suspect.

Then combing back through the names of anyone who might have even remotely been involved in the investigations, or might have lived nearby during that timeframe, was researched until a Deangelo's name surfaced. The police then surreptitiously obtained the actual DNA from Joseph James Deangelo (Discarded Coke can or cigarette butt, etc.) and had their exact match.

Ok, if you are not a criminal, this is not really an issue for you. But the question is, can you avoid exposing yourself or others to this?

The answer is most likely no. Even if you never submit genealogic DNA. Even if you quickly take down you existing DNA results. Let me explain why.

To ensure that your DNA is never available for such use, you would have to achieve two goals.

First, never submit for genealogic DNA results. That gets you out of the woods now, correct? Wrong!

Second step, contact every person in the world, whether you know them of not, that shares your surname Y-DNA and get an assurance from them that they (and their offspring) will never submit for genealogy DNA.

As you can see this would be an almost impossible task. But let's say you achieved both these requirements. You are still likely not free from fear. Why? Because the odds are that someone, somewhere in the world, with your Y-DNA has already submitted that DNA. Too late!

Finally, tightening the rules at the DNA companies to try and prevent police access would not work. It is only that access to compare, which allows the genealogy progress in the first place. Even passing a law not allowing the police to do such a thing would not prevent it. It could still be accomplished in the background, without permission. Remember, once they have a suspect's name, any one of a number of reasons can be given in reports as to how the connection could have been made.

So, whatever you may think of the police tactic, the cat is already out of the bag. Personally, I still think that the good that DNA is doing far, far out-weighs the bad…….

Please do not let this be the reason you do not take advantage of DNA usage for genealogy purposes.

See you at the reunion!
Bruce Varner

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