

Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project – Article 20

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This is the twentieth in a series of articles about the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project. The previous nineteen articles have appeared in the last nineteen issues of this journal, which prior to this year (2009) was called the *Journal of Clan Ewing*. They are also available online through links at the project's web site (www.EwingFamilyAssociation.org/DNA_Project/index_Y-DNA.html).

Discussing the Y-DNA Project requires using some terms and abbreviations that will be unfamiliar to beginners. Definitions and explanations of these can be found in the early Y-DNA Project articles and elsewhere on the project's web site. Extensively cross-linked results tables, project participant lineages, group relationship diagrams and network diagrams are also available on the project's web site.

Progress of the Project

The Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project continues to grow and mature. We now have results on 113 participants, all but five of whom have been tested at thirty-seven markers or more. Based on recent experience, it looks like we can expect about two additional participants to join the project each month. The usefulness of the project for genealogical research is proportional to the number of participants and the quality and quantity of the conventional genealogic information they have supplied.

Future Directions

Testing Scots

It would be of enormous interest to have test results on a nice-sized sample of men from several different areas in Scotland to compare with the results we already have, which are mostly on American men. It is possible that this would shed light on where in Scotland the ancestors of the various American lines may have originated, though of course new questions would also arise.

I recently entered a correspondence with the 'manager' of Clan McEwen in Scotland, who introduced himself by grumbling about our trying to poach members of his Clan, but he vanished into thin air as soon as I began sharing our resources and inviting his group to participate in research with us.

The experience of other Y-DNA surname projects has been that it is difficult to recruit old-world participants, and the few of them who have had significant success have done so by offering the testing for free. To undertake a project like this, we would need to make a concerted effort to identify something like twenty candidates for testing, and to be willing to pony up maybe \$2,400 to pay for the testing. I made a couple of half-hearted forays into offering to write articles for Scots publications and finding free advertising, but these have fallen flat. I had the idea to get phone listings (and actually did get some for Ayrshire from Jay Reed when he was visiting there in 2006) and just start cold calling Scots Ewings, but I just have not been able to work up the enthusiasm for that kind of commitment.

Mathematical Analysis

There has been a fair amount of discussion in the genetic genealogy community about using mathematical tools to determine the time depth of branch points using Y-DNA STR results. I have spent several hours recently discussing a method using correlation analysis with Bill Howard, the retired astronomer who developed it. Others favor methods that depend on calculating variance. Following these discussions has been a struggle for me. I do not have a strong background in statistics, because I always preferred going dancing to studying math. My intuition is that these techniques are unlikely to be

very fruitful for trying to sort out family branches originating in just the last ten or fifteen generations. Still, intuition is no substitute for really understanding the arguments, and maybe an interested person with the right background and disposition could make something of this.

What Should We Do?

I guess I need to drop the editorial 'we' to approach answering this question. What should I do? I know that at least some of you recognize and appreciate the amount of time I have put into the Y-DNA Project over the last five years. For much of this period, I was fascinated, challenged and learning so much that the work was effortless. Lately, it has seemed more like work. I get almost no feedback about the Y-DNA Articles, and I worry that only a very few of our members are interested enough to really follow the project. I end up thinking that it makes more sense for me to correspond privately with those of you who are interested and have specific questions. I may write an article from time-to-time if an especially interesting tidbit comes up, but I now plan to stop writing a regular column with detailed articles in every *Journal* issue. I have started work on a book about the project, and I plan to work primarily on that instead of continuing the article series. I will continue to maintain the project and will add participant results and lineages to the tables and diagrams on the web site as they come in. I will gladly respond to all inquiries and help folks interpret their results. But I am personally not ready to start any new initiatives like those outlined in the preceding paragraphs.

On the other hand, I would very much welcome anyone who is interested in pursuing these or other directions in the Y-DNA Project to 'get after it', and I would be happy to support and coach as may be desired. So, although I am pooped, we can do anything you have the enthusiasm for.

Conventional Genealogy

As you may have noticed in my Chancellor's message in August and in the Dear Cousins letter that accompanied the recent membership renewal notice, I believe that the best thing for the *Ewing Family Association (EFA)* to next do is to focus on the Ewing Genealogy Documentation (EGD) project. This effort is completely independent of the Y-DNA Project, but the Y-DNA Project could benefit tremendously from the research and documentation that goes into the EGD project. We will be trying to find sponsors for all Ewing lines in the EGD project, but I am especially interested in finding sponsors for the lines that are well represented in the Y-DNA Project. The project's Groups 1a and 1b already have EGD Genealogies posted. What I would like to see next are EGD Genealogies for the other Ewing Y-DNA Project Groups that have three or more members: Groups 1c, 1d, 2a, 2b, 4a, 4c, 4d and 5a. If you are not sure which group your Y-DNA Project participant is in, have a look at his lineage on the web site¹ and it will tell you.

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, Ewing surnamed, relative to submit a specimen. For more information, visit the project's web

¹ Use the list of participant identifiers (for example, DN) posted at:
www.EwingFamilyAssociation.org/DNA_Project/SiteMap_YDNA.html
to view a lineage.

site² and the FTDNA web site.³ 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*.

David Neal Ewing has been a member of Ewing Family Association 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 the Administrator of the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project, which he founded in 2004, and he is a regular contributor to the Ewing Family Journal. 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.

² www.EwingFamilyAssociation.org/DNA_Project/index_Y-DNA.html

³ www.FamilyTreeDNA.com/public/Ewing