

D-OGS Newsletter – January 2018

News & Articles of Interest to Durham-Orange genealogists

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2018 dues – \$20

2018 President – David McCorkle

D-OGS MEETING FOR 20 JANUARY 2018

The January 2018 meeting of D-OGS will be held on 20 January from 10am-noon at the Chapel Hill Public Library, 100 Library Drive in Chapel Hill, NC. Library Drive is located off Estes Drive, just north of the Franklin Street/Estes Drive intersection. Parking is often tight at the library so it is wise to carpool, if possible.

Did you get a DNA kit for Christmas, or do you have one just sitting on the shelf because you weren't sure what to do with it? Do you want to know what it all means and what to expect? Have you already received your DNA results and have no idea what they mean and how to use them? Do you understand how to interpret your results, but have a particularly tricky issue?

Join the Durham-Orange Genealogical Society Saturday, January 20, 2018 from 10AM to 12PM at the Chapel Hill Public Library Meeting Room A for a free presentation and hands-on workshop on how to use DNA for genealogy. We'll help you with your specific issues no matter what your level of expertise. DNA can help you break through those brick walls, and also find distant cousins you never knew who might have family information and artifacts.

If you have a DNA kit you have not used yet, be sure to bring it – we can help you spit! We will have computers available, but feel free to bring your laptop or tablet if you have one.

D-OGS NEEDS YOUR HELP

We are starting the new year without a VP/Program Chair and Secretary. Would someone be willing to step up to help keep D-OGS operating? Without the officers in place to help, the officers and board will be short-handed. This will make it harder to plan programs and other functions. In a nutshell, it means that the volunteer officers and directors will need to spend more of their own time and resource just to keep the D-OGS organization operating.

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW IF YOU RECEIVED A DNA TEST FOR THE HOLIDAYS

With prices lower than ever and curiosity about our genetic past at an all time high, DNA tests were some of the most popular gifts this holiday season. If you treated yourself to a

test, or unwrapped a kit over the holidays, here are some important things to keep in mind while you're waiting for your results.

1. Expect Some Delays

Unprecedented numbers of DNA kits were sold over the holiday season (we're talking **millions**) and you can bet that will mean some slowdowns in processing time.

Although almost all of the top companies promise results in 6-8 weeks it is not uncommon for it to take longer even under normal circumstances. Although we cannot say with any certainty that delays are a definite, or how long they will be if they happen, it seems **very likely** that many will be waiting longer to see their results come in than expected.

2. Your Results Should Not Be Taken at Face Value

The excitement of seeing your results once they do come back is usually well worth the potentially long wait. But after scanning your ethnicity report and peeking at your genetic matches you might find yourself scratching your head trying to figure out what it all means.

Many people who have not tested before will be expecting to get a nice, simple report that tells them **exactly** where their ancestors come from. But, although companies like [AncestryDNA](#), [MyHeritage DNA](#) and [Family Tree DNA](#) are always improving the accuracy of results (and the beauty and simplicity of their reports) what you will see in front of you **should not be taken at face value** – especially as it pertains to your admixture (ethnicity or ancestry breakdown).

The key to understanding your results is **understanding how these tests work**, and their limitations. Because your ethnicity report is created by comparing your unique DNA sample to specially selected populations in the database of your testing provider (some of which are broader and some more granular), and because many of these populations have overlaps and are limited in their scope, the ancestry report you receive is **not a perfect look at your genetic past**. Instead it is a best guess created by advanced computer algorithms based on available data.

It is not unusual for someone to show matches to regions or groups their ancestors were not actually part of (this is especially true for small percentages, but can be equally true for large ones).

And it is just as common that findings you *expected* simply don't appear. This can mean that some of what you know about your past is incorrect or partially incorrect, or it can simply mean that what you are seeing is a different perspective on your past based on available information, or that your connection to that region or group is more distant than you expected.

Take some time to educate yourself about your chosen test before or after your results come in. Understand what populations are included and how they are defined, understand which ones are not available, learn about how genetic inheritance works and read articles and forum posts to help you sort through your findings.

3. DNA Research is Always Better When Combined With Genealogy Research

If you are not a family historian and have taken a DNA test anyway, this might be a great time to start diving into your family's past. Any results you receive will be strengthened by understanding them in the context of genealogical research.

Knowing your ancestors' names, origins and stories will help you make sense of potentially confusing ancestry reports and will guide you in connecting with genetic matches.

If you're brand new to genealogy, keep it simple by interviewing your family members for some basic information and writing it down. Then you can enter those details into an online family tree when you're ready. Keep an eye out next week for our new Family Tree Guide for help choosing one.

4. You Can Do More With Your Results Than You Probably Thought

Once you get your results and begin to make sense of them you might like to explore your genetic past even more. Luckily, you have some options. There are a number of places that you can upload your DNA to to get new reports and discover more cousins. [Read this article for where \(and how\) to upload your DNA and get safely more reports for free.](#)

5. Privacy Settings are Not Set in Stone

Many people are (very rightly) concerned about their privacy when taking a DNA test. When you first scrape your cheek or spit into a tube, you will also have to sign or agree to some privacy policies in the process and you may have some options for opting in or out of certain types of sharing. When you get your results back (and sometimes before), these results will be associated with an online account and many times you can change settings associated with your privacy.

Perhaps you will change your mind about whether you would like to include your results in internal and 3rd party research (MyHeritage and Ancestry both offer this option when signing up but it can be changed in your account) or you might like to change settings to limit **how** others can see your genetic results or that of any associated genealogy information.

Take the time to read privacy and consent documents, know your options in your account settings and change them so that **you feel comfortable**. If you change your mind after sending your results in you can even request to have your sample destroyed. Every company will honor this.

Knowing what to expect, educating yourself until you truly understand your results, and feeling comfortable with your level of privacy are all integral parts of a positive DNA testing experience. We wish you a wonderful genetic journey!

If you haven't already, sign up for our newsletter below and stay in the know as we continue to publish helpful information to help you understand DNA for family history.

HOW TO TRANSFER CASSETTE TAPES TO A COMPUTER FOR LONG-TERM PRESERVATION

(I don't know about you but I have a collection of old cassette tapes that I need to copy to a new medium. This article should help us remedy this problem. **Editor**)

A newsletter reader wrote to me recently, asking:

“I am in the process of backing up my family/genealogy records. There is a lot of information available about commercial services transfer of information. However, I am not seeing much about transfer of audiotapes to more stable backup. Have you written any articles or know of sources to help me evaluate commercial services for audiotapes?”



My answer is:

“No, I have not written about that simply because so many audio experts have already written about the topic and many of their articles are available online. I am not going to duplicate articles that have already been written. You can find dozens of articles describing several different methods by starting at:

<https://duckduckgo.com/?q=copy+audio+tapes+to+digital&t=hg&ia=web>.

“My favorite article about transferring old audio tapes to computer digital files is **How to Transfer Cassette Tape to Computer** on the WikiHow site at:

<https://www.wikihow.com/Transfer-Cassette-Tape-to-Computer>. It is very detailed and lavishly illustrated with some excellent drawings illustrating each recommended step. Check it out.”

(Newsletter reader response: Check with the libraries in the area. Many of them are starting to have machines that can convert VCRs to DVD, audio tapes to Mp3s, etc. Although you have to do the work, the use of the machines is usually free. If your local library does not have this facility, check other libraries in the area.)

(Reprinted from Dick Eastman’s Online Genealogical Newsletter)

WHAT WOULD YOU TAKE? EVACUATING YOUR GENEALOGY IN AN EMERGENCY

In this article, Gena Philibert-Ortega writes about having to recently evacuate her home due to the raging California wildfires – and how she decided what genealogy records and family heirlooms to take with her. Gena is a genealogist and author of the book “[From the Family Kitchen](#).”

For those living in California, the threat of an earthquake is always there. Unless you have experienced a “big one” you probably have become complacent to the damage and destruction a really big earthquake can wreck. Californians also deal with a season that most states lack: “fire season.” While this season was once thought to be restricted to certain months of the year, it has now become a nearly year-long reality.

2017 is ending with a string of fire storms in Southern California. While other states are starting to report snowfall, California is experiencing temperatures in the 70s and 80s with strong, dry Santa Ana winds. Warm weather, winds, and dry brush are the perfect ingredients for the six major California fires that started to burn in December.

Fire Forced My Family to Evacuate

At first, these December fires were nowhere near where I live. The nearest fire was over an hour and a half away. I had been reassuring concerned friends that my family was in no danger and there was nothing to worry about. However, that changed in a matter of about an hour – when we went from being far away from the fires to having a fire that was at the end of my street! No known cause has been determined yet, but with high winds and a field full of dry brush it was just a matter of time before we could be in grave danger.

As we watched the black smoke, fire engines, and police officers gather in our neighborhood, it was obvious that plans needed to be made. By the time the sheriff told us we were under voluntary evacuation, I had already started packing the car to leave. With the amount of smoke present and the visible flames, the fire had quickly become a little too close for comfort.

As he gave us information about leaving, the sheriff said something that really stuck with me. While a voluntary evacuation is just that, voluntary, the next level would be a mandatory evacuation. He warned us: “The next time I come and tell you to leave, you will have five minutes to go.”

So, in a matter of moments, what do you take knowing that everything else might be destroyed before you can come back? What do you decide are the most precious items to bring with you? Obviously, there will be things related to your day-to-day life you’ll want to leave with – but what about your family history? What documents, photographs, heirlooms, books and other resources do you take with you?

Get It Off Your Computer!

One thing that became obvious to me as I was packing up was the importance of not only backing up computer files, but also having that backup in more than one place. For me, I realized that I didn't have all of my family photos digitized and stored in the "cloud." I have started that process but am not quite done. Now that the emergency is over and my family is safely back home, that is a priority.

Make sure that you back up your computer regularly and that you digitize your family history and photos – and store everything in the cloud. My family's recent voluntary evacuation gave me the "luxury" of time to decide what to take; however, you will not be afforded that if faced with a sudden mandatory evacuation, or if you are away from home during the emergency (for example, at work or travel).

Important Papers

After our voluntary evacuation, my son and I traveled to my parents' home. One of my mom's first questions when we arrived was if I had grabbed all of our "important papers." Now, of course, when I hear "important papers" I think genealogy – but she was thinking financial paperwork.

You know what? I didn't grab any financial records because I felt like they could, with some effort, be replaced. But I did consider my genealogy papers and which of those couldn't be replaced – and was overwhelmed to realize there was too much to grab. Everyone's list of what to take in an emergency is going to be different, and that's ok. But now is the time to seriously consider what should be digitized and uploaded to the cloud – or even given to a family member on a flash drive should something happen. What genealogy papers should you digitize?

If you're overwhelmed by the process, start by digitizing original copies of items or documents that cannot be easily replaced. For now, skip scanning things like copies of documents easily found online (census records, for example).

In an evacuation situation, don't take anything that is not an original copy or that you can obtain copies easily. What should you consider taking during an emergency? My personal belief is you should grab anything that is original and/or cannot be replaced. So, for me that would be:

- Diaries/journals
- Photographs
- Letters of correspondence from ancestors
- Awards, recognition
- Original naturalization, military, or other papers
- One of the questions I kept asking myself as I was packing was: "What cannot be replaced?"

Heirlooms

What heirlooms do you have? Some items that made it into my car were my great-grandmother's hand-painted 50th anniversary china bowl, a souvenir from Paris owned

by my husband's grandmother, and my maternal grandmother's hand-made soap. I also grabbed various framed photos off the walls.

I know that seems eclectic and weird (something my son pointed out when I couldn't find clean clothes in my suitcase the following day). But those are items that, once they are gone, they are gone forever.

Did I forget some things? You bet! So that's why I'm following through on a plan I've had for a while but have never completed: I'm putting together a book of heirloom images that include provenance details, etc., so that if something was to happen and everything was destroyed, we would at least have a physical reminder of those items. And yes, I will be backing it up to my cloud storage.

Your Turn

No matter where you live there's a chance of some sort of natural or man-made disaster. Fires, earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, you name it. As genealogists we are the custodians of our family heirlooms and memories. So, we need to take that responsibility seriously. We may not be able to do much in the case of a sudden emergency, but planning ahead is much better than making a last-minute decision in the stress of the moment.

GENEALOGY TIPS OF THE MONTH FROM MICHAEL JOHN NEILL

Living in the Shadows of the History Books

When was the last time you reviewed the history of the area where your ancestors lived? In the United States did the boundaries change during your ancestor's lifetime? Was there an economic downturn at a point where your ancestor is "missing?" Was your ancestor's country occupied by another country shortly before he immigrated or left? Those details all could impact choices your ancestor made, even if his name does not appear in the history books.

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A Warm Body In the Area

Before you draw any conclusions about the person who appears as a witness on your ancestor's document, remember that a witness does not have to be a relative. A witness needs to be of legal age and know the person signing the document.

A witness could have simply been someone else who happened to be nearby when your ancestor signed his document.

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Yes Or No Doesn't Always Get Results

When asking family members questions avoid queries that have "yes" or "no" answers. Open-ended questions such as "why did you leave the county to get married," "where was Grandma born," and "who was Uncle Harry's mother?" are preferable to "did you get married in Mercer County," "was Grandma born in Arkansas" and "Uncle Harry's mother was actually Aunt Sis, right?"

Of course, asking for clarification or confirmation of name or location is sometimes necessary. Just try and avoid questions that suggest answers.

It sometimes is called "leading the witness."

And sometimes you get more detail when you do not suggest the answer.

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Get Past the Letters

In determining whether a name is the "same" or not, get past the letters and concentrate on the sounds. Whenever I cannot find the last name of Habben, I always look for Hobbin as Habben is usually pronounced in a way that rhymes with "bobbin."

Every name has variant spellings. Every one.

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Reading Between the Lines

Many times genealogists have to read between the lines in a document in order to "squeeze out" as many details as possible. Be careful when you do this, making certain you have a valid reason and justification for thinking a record "says more than it does." Always include your line of reasoning and your rationale for going beyond what the document actually says in your research notes.

There are several reasons for doing this: 1) You may forget why you thought the record said more than it did; 2) Someone else may ask "where you got that--I don't see that;" and 3) you may be wrong.

The last reason rarely happens, but is a theoretical possibility <grin>.

WEBSITES OF POSSIBLE INTEREST

PIEDMONT TRAILS - <https://piedmonttrailsblog.wordpress.com/> - (from the author)
"Piedmont Trails was organized in September of 2017 to allow communication and researching data to be shared via blog. Due to the changes with genealogy research

guidelines during the past 10 years, it was necessary to create a system that would enable me to share my opinions, research data and communication links freely with no strings or “fees” attached. This was the main reason for developing Piedmont Trails. My name is Carol and I want to welcome you all to my journey.”

The author has put a good bit of info on the Great Wagon Road, a collection of family surnames, links to NC Genealogy stuff by county and even some old recipes. I think you may find something useful or interesting.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

ALAMANCE COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM - Museum Lecture Series: *Unique Items from the Collections of the Alamance County Historical Museum*, By William Murray Vincent, Ph.D., Director, ACHM

Join us for dinner at Michelle’s Kitchen & Table followed by discussion of three curated artifacts selected from the archives of ACHM. Learn the facts and discover the relationship of these objects to the history of Alamance County.

Wednesday, January 17, 2018, 6:00 p.m., 2641 South Church Street, Burlington, NC - \$40 per person per session - Rsvp: by January 15, 2018

Alamance County Historical Museum - 4777 South NC 62, Burlington, NC 27215 - (336)226-8254

TASTE HILLSBOROUGH: Taste Carolina Gourmet Walking Tours - January 20 @ 9:30 am - 1:00 pm - Talk and tour with chefs, owners, and farmers while exploring Hillsborough’s history and architecture. Enjoy the warmth and friendliness of the town and, of course, plenty of food, including handmade chocolates, market pastries, artisan sandwiches, organic wine, and a stop at one of the most esteemed restaurants in the Southeast!

CHAPEL HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY - *The Carolina Playmakers and the Federal Theatre Project Presentation* by Cecelia Moore, UNC Historian. Sunday, January 21, 2018 3:00-5:00 PM, Meeting Room B, Chapel Hill Public Library, 100 Library Drive, Chapel Hill, NC

The Carolina Playmakers is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the company's founding. Join us to learn about one of the most interesting periods in its history.

During the Depression, how did the federal government help keep the arts alive and playwrights employed? UNC's own Frederick Koch and Paul Green had already begun a successful folk drama program. Their program became the model for the Federal Theatre Project, making live theatre relevant to local audiences.

Cecelia Moore is the University Historian and the Project Manager for the Chancellor's Task Force on University History. She has earned degrees in Theatre and Public History, and a PhD in History. She will discuss her new book, *The Federal Theatre Project in the American South: The Carolina Playmakers and the Quest for American Drama*.

Free and open to the public. Call the Chapel Hill Historical Society for additional information: 919-929-1793.

WAKE COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY - DNA: Mapping Your Chromosomes using DNAPainter! - Tuesday January 23, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm - Olivia Raney Local History Library, 4016 Carya Drive, Raleigh, NC 27610

The "mystery" program for January is **DNA: Mapping your Chromosomes using DNAPainter**.

You've taken one or more DNA tests, you've looked at your ethnicity reports, and you've found some relatives whose DNA matches yours. Maybe you've even loaded your DNA into GedMatch. What's next? Chromosome mapping!

We will view and discuss a recent video by Blaine Bettinger about chromosome mapping using a new tool, DNAPainter. This tool is currently free. Some WCGS members say it's the easiest mapping tool they have seen. Blaine is an attorney and an expert in DNA. He is also an excellent speaker.

All WCGS meetings are free and open to the public. Bring a friend! Refreshments will be served during social time after the presentation.

In case of inclement weather, check our website <http://www.wakecogen.org/> or Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Wake-County-Genealogical-Society-231325130212311/?fref=ts>

EDGECOMBE COMMUNITY COLLEGE HISTORIC PRESERVATION TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM - For more information about the upcoming courses, contact: Monika Fleming, (252) 823-5166, ext. 241, flemingm@edgecombe.edu or visit <https://www.edgecombe.edu/programs/business-industry-and-technologies/historic-preservation-technology/> or <http://www.facebook.com/HPTatECC>

1/27 at 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Introduction to Genealogy - A basic course for beginners to learn how to complete family tree charts, family group sheets and how to identify and locate genealogical records including census records and vital records. Fee \$70

HIGH POINT PUBLIC LIBRARY - 26 January 2018, 9 February 2018, & 2 March 2018, 10:30 AM to Noon - WINTER BOOK CLUB at the [High Point Public Library](#) 3rd Floor Book Lovers Room - "Southern Honor: Masculine Culture and Violence in the Antebellum South" - A deep sensitivity to personal and family honor is said to have persisted in the South before the Civil War, leading to norms of aggressive and violent behavior among men. The culture of dueling, roughhouse fighting, some forms of domestic violence, and

lynching are all said to have their roots in this cultural complex. We'll read Bertram Wyatt-Brown's seminal, but highly controversial book. No preregistration necessary. For further information, contact the library at (336) 883-3637.

HISTORIC STAGVILLE - JANUARY 27th, 2018: 17th Annual African-American Cultural Celebration at the North Carolina Museum of History. Come visit us in Raleigh as we celebrate and explore the stories of African Americans in North Carolina. We'll be making cowrie shell jewelry, showing off our new education programs, and recruiting volunteers!

GRANVILLE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Featured Speaker: **Mildred C. Goss** - "City of Creedmoor and the families of the area". The program for the February 1, 2018 meeting of the Granville County Genealogical Society will be presented by Mrs. Mildred C. Goss. She will present information about the City of Creedmoor and the families of the area.

Mildred, a native of the Granville county, was born in Sassafras Fork Township. She graduated from Stovall High School in Stovall. After high school she moved to the southern end of the county where she joined the workforce in Butner. While working she obtained three Associate degrees and raised her three children. Goss retired from ADATC in Butner as Health Information Manager in 1996 after working forty years with the state. Retiring is not in her vocabulary; she organized the GCGS in August of 1994 before retiring and has been the president since inception. Goss has researched her father's Currin family back to Kilkenny Ireland in 1320, and published several books.

Please join members of the Granville County Genealogical Society in attending this meeting, to be held at 6:30 P.M. on February 1, 2018 in the conference room at the Richard H. Thornton Library in Oxford, N.C. All GCGS meetings are open to the public, and visitors and guests are always cordially invited to attend.

HUMOR

On the grave of Ezekiel Aikle in East Dalhousie Cemetery, Nova Scotia:

***Here lies Ezekiel Aikle
Age 102
The Good
Die Young.***

PARTING THOUGHT

No one ever drowned in their own sweat. – Author unknown

If you have any items of interest that you would like to submit for future publication, please contact Richard Ellington at mailto:richard_ellington@unc.edu or 919.967.4168