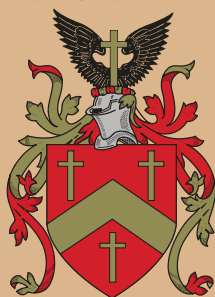


Austin Families Association of America

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2020

Fostering Austin Genealogy & Heritage



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Early Virginia Records Mention Walter Austin

• Who was Walter? •

By John Clinard

In our last newsletter (Vol. 30, No. 1) Barbara Austin Giacomelli commented on the work of Janet Austin Curtis, one of AFAOA's founders. Barbara had just finished the transcription of Janet's 500-page notebook, recording information on Austins in Virginia. This document is now on the AFAOA Web site under "Publications—States Notebooks of Janet Austin Curtis".

Barbara noted some interesting historical facts of 1641–42 concerning Walter Austin. Who was this Walter Austin who explored uncharted land south of the Appomattox River with partners Rice Hoe,

This spelling of our subject's name (Austin) was used in two separate references that I could find:

1641 — Petition by Walter **Austin** et al. to the Virginia General Assembly as quoted in *The History of Pittsylvania County Virginia*, Maud Carter Clement, page 3.

1643 — Act of the General Assembly granting a land patent to Walter **Austin** et al., as found in *Virginia Statues*, William Waller Hening, March 1643, Vol 1, page 262.

More research was necessary. A good starting place to investigate early Virginia settlers is Nell Nugent's book "Cavaliers and Pioneers—Vol 1", that covers Patent Books 1–5 for 1623–1666. In this book we found no references to Walter Austin; but we did find 5 references to Walter **Aston** and 3 references to Walter **Ashton**.

What's in a name? What's in a surname? Would an Austin by any other name still be an Austin? DNA is helping us answer such questions. In a presentation I made at the Fort Wayne conference of October 2019, I proved that several men with the surnames of Rice and Sumner were really members of the "Thomas Austin of New Kent County, Virginia" Y-DNA line. Later I proved that some men with the surnames Austin and Lewis were really from the Jett Y-DNA line.

Using Nugent's work and studying in some depth the families of Rice Hoe and Walter Chiles, I have concluded that this Walter Austin was really Walter Aston (1607–1656) who is buried with his son

continued on page 2



Joseph Johnson and Walter Chiles? Was Walter a forefather of an Austin line of Southside Virginia? Does he connect to any of the Austin families in our AFAOA databases? In the notes attached to Janet's work, it appears that attempts were made to answer some of these questions. Now I think we have found an answer to the mystery of Walter Austin.

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NEW MEMBERS

And their Earliest Known Austin Ancestors

Pamela Austin Sumler

1417 Shadeland Drive, Houston, TX 77043;
satsirihou@aol.com; *William Vernon b. 6 May 1872 Westfield, MA; Edwin Douglas b.21 July 1898 New Haven, CT; Edwin Douglas b. 9 Feb 1928 Danbury, CT*

Cynthia ("Cindy") Jennings Taylor

2561A YY Rd., Emporia, KS 66801, taylorci53@yahoo.com;
"Thomas Austin of New Kent Co. VA" b.~1600 Eng; ... Joseph b.~1782 VA; Joseph b.1820 Howard Co. MO; William G. b.1847 Jackson Co. MO; Samuel E. b.1877 Jackson Co. MO

Robert Wiggins Johnson Jr.

4063 Marchfield Drive South, Mobile AL 36693; rjohnson35216@hotmail.com; *Deborah Auston b. 1645 Scituate, Plymouth, MA (m.2 John Whedbee in Perquimans Co., NC)*

Robin Dahlstrom

3508 Lakeshore Dr. SW, Smyrna, GA 30082;
rsdahlstrom@earthlink.net; "Nathaniel Austin of Greenville, South Carolina". b. 1720 York, England

Alice Austin Martin
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Walter Austin, continued from page 1

Walter in the Westover Plantation Cemetery of Charles City, VA. Walter Aston, immigrant of 1627 aboard the ship *James*, is mentioned by Nugent as a before-1643 transportee of Sir Francis Wyatt. Walter gained several tracts of land over time. In 1638 he gained 590 acres; in 1642, 250 acres (granted by William Berkeley); and in 1646, 1040 acres. All of Walter's holdings were in Charles City, VA. The Nugent book helps a great deal. Be careful because sometimes Aston is spelled Astin, and sometimes Ashton. When Walter is mentioned with either wife, Warbowe or Hannah, you know you are on the right track.

Looking at Walter Aston's ancestors, we find his father was Walter Aston (1584-1639) of Staffordshire, England. His grandfather was Leonard Aston (1552-1589), also of Staffordshire. His great-grandfather was Sir Walter Aston of Tixall (1530-1589), also in Staffordshire. His great-great-grandfather was Edward Aston of Tixall (1500-1568). Edward's father was Sir John Aston.

Finding Walter's descendants is a continuing work. There are 141 men/women with surname Aston in our AFAOA databases, many being associated with the "George Aston of Pennsylvania" line and quite a few "Unplaced Southern Austins" with that name as well. Linking any of these Southern Austin-Aston men to Walter Aston (b. 1607) is a daunting task covering more than 350 years of Aston lineage. Modern Aston men may use the Austin spelling of their name, which could make the task just a "bit" harder.

What about help from our Y-DNA studies? Art Sikes reports two kits known to descend from "George Aston of PA". These share the G-M201 haplogroup. We have no knowledge at all concerning the Y-DNA of Walter Aston (b. 1607). Perhaps, someday there will be an associated Y-DNA study that will give us insight.

database SPOTLIGHT

William & Ruth of North Carolina

Editor: C. Wayne Austin

(5,612 individuals in 1,860 families)

William Austin was born about 1700 in Ireland and died after 2 Sep 1770 in Southampton County, Virginia. He married Ruth Bryant about 1724 in Ireland. Ruth died after 1778 in Virginia. Their immigration took place prior to 1770

William and Ruth had 5 children, named in the Southampton County Will Book 3, p 20. [Will of William Austin, d. Sep 2, 1770 and recorded 12 March 1778. Wife Ruth; sons Charles, John, and Richard; daus Sarah (Austin) Jackson and Molly Austin. Executors of record: wife, Ruth and Edward Drew.]

Their 3 sons were born in Ireland. Charles (b. 1726) and his wife Mary McBee came to America prior to the Revolutionary War with their seven children. They brought their family bible with them and it was still in the Austin family in 1929. It is presumed that Charles and Mary did not come to America at the same time as William and Ruth, but at a later date. They settled in the Hillsborough District of Wake County, North Carolina. His brothers, John (b. 1727) and Richard (b. 1728), and their families, also settled in North Carolina.

Many new entries have recently been made in this database. They can be seen on the website's "What's New" page.

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An Unusual Year for AFAOA

No one needs to be told that this is an unusual year requiring unusual measures. For AFAOA, the situation with the pandemic has required some necessary changes to our business and social practices:

1. We have cancelled the AFAOA Conference that was to be held in Williamsburg, Virginia in late August. The Conference will take place next year in Williamsburg, at a time yet to be determined, after a Covid-19 vaccine is successfully in use. Most of our officers and members recognize that their immunization is a necessary precondition for attending the next Conference.

2. This is an election year for AFAOA officers. We find it necessary to modify our election procedure, in which nominations were made, and the vote taken, in the Association's business meeting, at the annual Conference. The Nominating Committee has chosen a slate of officers and is presenting it in this newsletter. We are forgoing additional nominations. We ask that you, as a member, vote in writing—by paper ballot or email—and that you send your vote by the end of August. (Ballot and mailing instructions are on page 7.) The result of the election will be announced in the Fall newsletter.

3. In September, the AFAOA Board will meet, using the Zoom video conferencing software platform and, after some planning discussion, the Board will prepare AFAOA's 2021 budget. The annual business meeting, normally held during the AFAOA Conference, will be conducted remotely, probably in late September, also using Zoom. All usual officer and committee reports will be included. Old and new business will be discussed. As a final action, the new slate of AFAOA officers will be installed and welcomed. Instructions for accessing the Zoom Business Meeting will be shared in our Fall newsletter so that members may participate remotely.

John Clinard
president@afaoa.org

Report of the Nominating Committee

Gay Martin was appointed chairman of the Nominating Committee, which also includes Jane Bruckner, Barbara Giacomelli and Art Sikes. The committee has chosen the following slate of Officers for election to a two-year term, beginning with installation in the Fall of 2020, as prescribed in the AFAOA Bylaws.

President: John Clinard (second term)
Vice Presidents: Joy Davis and David Neithamer (second terms), and Elizabeth Neithamer
Secretary-Treasurer: Barbara Giacomelli
Genealogist: Liz Austin Carlin (no term limit)

There are only two changes from the previous slate of 2018–2020. Since Paula Mackey has served for two terms as Secretary-Treasurer she is retiring, opening the slot for Barbara Giacomelli, who is currently serving as a Vice President. Elizabeth Neithamer is nominated to fill the position of Vice President.

We wish to thank Paula Mackey for her devoted service.



Barbara Giacomelli, Liz Carlin, Paula Mackey,
John Clinard, Dave Neithamer

**Thanks to all members
for your support of the
Austin Families Association of America!**

**Please notice the membership renewal date
on your address label.**

Dues are \$15 for 1 year, \$25 for 2 years

**Send to: Paula Mackey
5104 Golden Lane
Fort Worth, TX 76123**

The Y-Chromosome Line of E. Ray Austin

By John Clinard

I've known E. Ray Austin since 2012, when I attended the Lost Creek Austin Reunion (White County, Tennessee). My wife, Lillian, is an Austin from a line in east TN—not the same as the White County Austin line, but one that has been in east TN for 7 generations. Working with Ray was a natural consequence of his, and my wife's, Austin surname. Plus, Ray and I both have an association with the Austin Families Association of America.

Ray was an early compiler of Austin genealogy while he was actively serving in the US Army, even before the formation of AFAOA's Computer Project. In 1985, when he arrived at Fort Monroe, Virginia, computers were just coming into broad use. When Ray got one, he ordered a free copy of a genealogy program, PAF, from the LDS Family History Center. This led to contact with Ruth Marshall Austin of Danville, who was researching the family of her husband, Elba Branscomb Austin. While Ray was at Fort Monroe, and after he was transferred to Germany (1987–1990), Ruth mailed large envelopes of her research material to Ray, who then transcribed the documents into PAF computer files. Soon after his retirement in 1991, Ray submitted these files to the AFAOA, in the form of a GEDCOM, for inclusion in the new AFAOA website, which in 1992 was the first presentation of genealogy databases on the Internet. Today this information resides in the AFAOA database "Miles Austin of Franklin County, Virginia".

In 2007 E. Ray Austin was among the first to join the Family Tree DNA (FTDNA) Austin Y-DNA Project. He encouraged the use of Y-DNA studies for the Austin men of Lost Creek.

I became a member of AFAOA in 2011, when I also began my interest in genetic genealogy. Later, employing DNA as proof, I established that the progenitor of the Lost Creek Austin family was Nathaniel Austin, born in Virginia in 1742, son of Richard Austin born 1690 in New Kent County, VA.

For years E. Ray Austin had thought his line came from Nathaniel Austin (b. 1781), one of four brothers (William, John, Nathaniel, and David) who were sons of Nathaniel (b. 1742), and that his line was: Nathaniel Austin (b. 1781) – James Austin (b. 1807) – Elanza Austin (b. 1857) – Thaddeus Austin (b. 1876) – Luther Austin (b. 1899). However, this was not upheld by Ray's Y-DNA testing. His 2007 Y-DNA results showed that Ray did not match a single man with the surname Austin who had taken the test! He matched

men with surnames like Corbin and Jett. What did this mean? How could E. Ray Austin not be from the Austin Y-DNA family?

In 2009 Ray convinced his known cousin Benjamin Albert Austin to take a Y-DNA test. Benjamin is a ½ 2nd cousin of Ray with their male Most Recent Common Ancestor (MRCA) being their great grandfather Elanza Austin (b. 1857). Ray and Ben matched Y-signatures, as hoped and expected. This proved that Elanza Austin, as MRCA, had the same Y-DNA as both Ray and Ben. It also proved that Thaddeus Austin and Luther Austin shared this same Y-signature. The Y-haplogroup of these Austin men (as well as Benjamin Austin's father and grandfather) was I-M253. Where did this Y-DNA come from? It came from Elanza's father, of course, but who was Elanza's father? Available written records, such as census records, pointed to James being the father of Elanza. These did not constitute a proof, however. The proof would come from additional Y-DNA studies.

Ray convinced many of his male Austin cousins (those he thought were his cousins) to take Y-DNA tests. Three descendants of Nathaniel Austin of Lost Creek (b. 1781) took the Y-37-STR DNA test. These men were William Douglas Austin, Brandon Lee Austin, and Tommie Lee Austin. They all matched each other, with the same E-M2 Y-haplogroup and STR-signature, but they were not related to E. Ray Austin.

Ray had also convinced several other cousins (those he thought were cousins), who were descended from the brothers of Nathaniel, to test their Y-DNA: Tom Sewell Austin, a descendant of John Austin (b. 1779); Marvin Levere Austin, a descendant of William Austin (b. 1776); and Lowell Erskine Austin, a descendant of David Austin (b. 1783). All three men, (Tom, Marvin, and Lowell) were Y-DNA matches to each other and to William Douglas, Brandon Lee, and Tommie Lee. Their male MRCA was Nathaniel Austin (b. 1742), the progenitor of the Lost Creek Austins who brought his family from VA to TN in about 1790. Indeed, none of these men were the Y-kinfolk of E. Ray.

We had convincingly proved that E. Ray was a descendant of Elanza Austin (b. 1857), but that Elanza was not a member of the Lost Creek Austin Y-DNA family. Was Elanza's apparent father, James Austin, a Lost Creek Austin? All records for the family of Nathaniel Austin (b. 1781) and his wife Mary, seemed to hold together, showing that James (b. 1807 to Nathaniel & Mary) was a younger brother of William Henry (b. 1805) and his younger sister Elizabeth

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(b. 1808). This made us believe that James Austin was **not** the father of Elanza.

We began to think that Elanza was probably the son of James' stepdaughter, Rachel Anderson Austin (b.1833), and a local man she never married. This sort of thing is called an NPE (non-paternal event), and it is not rare, existing in many family lines. Rachel would have gotten pregnant about September of 1854 when she was 21 years old. To identify the father of Elanza it appeared we should be looking for a man in James Austin's neighborhood who was born, say, 1825–1835 for an age match to Rachel. We paid close attention to surnames of Y-DNA matches for E. Ray. The closest matches were to men with surnames of Corbin, Jett, and Lewis. Using census records for White Co. TN and near-by counties, we found Jett and Lewis families but not Corbin families. E. Ray expanded his DNA testing. After purchasing Y-67-STR and Family Finder (based on autosomal DNA), Ray agreed that his matches, and census records, suggested he was most likely descended from either a Jett or a Lewis man.

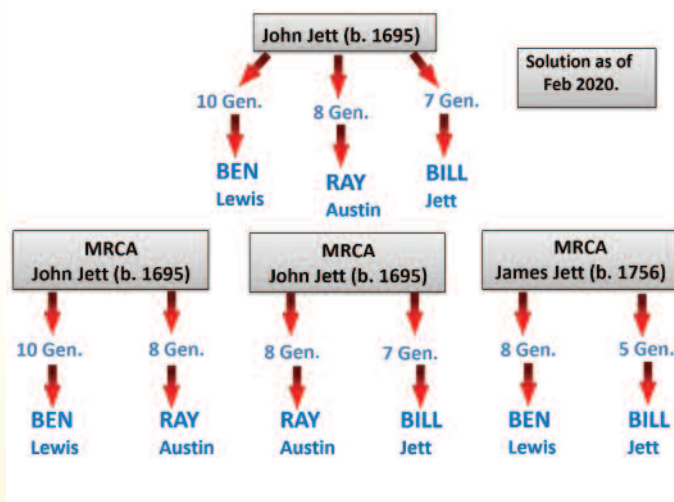
First, we pursued the possible Lewis connection. Ray matched a young man named Benjamin Lewis, who also had a match with several Jett men. After providing his family tree he agreed that his match to Ray was not due to Elanza's father's being of the Lewis Y-DNA.

That left the Jett surname as a probable answer. Ray matched a man named William S. (Bill) Jett. Bill Jett's maternal grandmother was Olivia Ethel Austin (b. 1891 in NC); she can be found in AFAOA's "John Austin of North Carolina" database. Bill is an active member of AFAOA and has a well-developed family tree with a Y-branch extending back many generations. We were able to show that Bill was related to Jett men living today in Sparta TN. The hope now was that we could find a Jett man, of the right age, near James Austin in 1854. The 1850 and 1860 census records supplied the answer. John W Jett (b. 1787) and his wife Mary White (b. 1791) had a son named Archibald Overton Jett (b. 1827 in White Co. TN). Archibald was 23 and single in 1850, living with his widowed mother Mary White Jett. Archibald was the only Jett man in our target age range living anywhere near James Austin in 1854.

We believe that Rachel bore Elanza out-of-wedlock; and that Rachel's stepfather, James Austin, raised Rachel's baby boy Elanza as his own son, with his wife Adeline Anderson Austin, Rachel's mother. James Austin decided to bestow the Austin surname on Elanza, and to treat him as a legitimate son (rather than as an illegitimate step grandson). We had an answer, but with no written proof, that E. Ray

Austin was the 2nd great-grandson of Archibald Overton Jett (b. 1827) and Rachel H. Anderson Austin (b. 1833). This explained Ray's Y-DNA matches to men with the surname Jett.

E. Ray Austin, Benjamin Lewis, and William S. Jett then moved to the most advanced Y-DNA test offered today by FTDNA. The test is called Big Y (or Y-700). It tests >700 STRs and >740,000 SNPs. These Short Tandem Repeats (STRs) and Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms (SNPs) are mutations of the Y-chromosome which differentiate a man from all other men. The fewer mismatches in the STRs and SNPs between two men, the closer their relationship. The conclusions were as expected. The STR and SNP mutation differences of these three men are close matches, showing that they have a common male ancestor of the Jett surname.



We think that Ben Lewis' Jett Y-DNA was also the result of an NPE. Ben's grandfather was Dewey Franklin Lewis (b. 1929), whose father was Robert Frank Lewis (b. 1909), whose father was George Pleasant Lewis (b. 1888), whose father was John Henry Lewis (b. 1853 in GA), whose father was **was supposed to be** Henry A. Louis (b. 1825 in Germany). We speculate the NPE consisted of an 1852 affair between Henry A. Louis' wife, Martha F. Wilson (b. 1832 in GA), and neighbor, Milledge Neal Jett (b. 1830 in GA). The resulting NPE child of Milledge Jett and Martha Wilson Louis was given the name of John Henry Lewis and was raised in the home of Henry A. Louis and Martha Wilson, his mother, as though John Henry was their legitimate son.

Our conclusion is that the common Jett ancestor of E. Ray Austin, Benjamin Lewis, and William S. "Bill" Jett is John Jett, Jr. (b. 1695 in Richmond VA), whose wife was Elizabeth Ann Wells (b. 1702).

What Is This DNA Stuff and Why Should I Care?

Part 2: DNA Testing Procedures

By David R. Neithamer

Now that you have a little background on the structure of cells and DNA, let's discuss how the four major testing companies (Ancestry.com, My Heritage, 23andMe, and FTDNA) actually test your DNA sample. They use the same basic technology—microarray beadchips. Although all of the beadchips come from the same company, Illumina, the tests are not created equal. The beadchip is only one part of the process. Each company develops their own algorithms, analysis and matching criteria, population references, and reports. Each company offers different tools for you to analyze your data, creating variations in results, accessibility, and usefulness.

So, how do they prepare your sample to be tested? After you spit into the tube, or swab your cheek, you immediately seal it with a stabilizer solution that protects the sample and prevents bacterial growth. Once the sample is received, the DNA is isolated from the cheek cells by dissolving the lipid (fatty) outer cell membrane with soap. The sample is then centrifuged to separate the cell parts from the DNA containing solution. The test assay only requires about 0.2 mg of the original DNA sample. That's about half of the weight of an average grain of sand and contains 1 to 10 million DNA molecules! However, many more are needed for the test. The six steps for the sample preparation are illustrated in **Figure 1**:

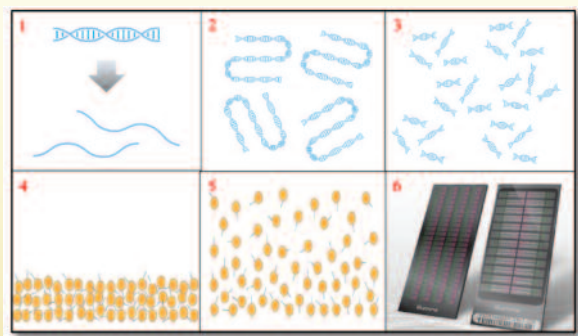


Figure 1: DNA Sample Preparation
Source: www.illumina.com

1. The DNA sample is thermally denatured and neutralized to separate the double helices into single strands.
2. Numerous copies (by a factor of millions) are made overnight by thermal cycling, using polymerase chain reaction (PCR). This process is called amplification.
3. The DNA sample is cut into smaller fragments which can then be analyzed. This is done using a con-

trolled enzymatic process which cuts the DNA, like cutting a string multiple times with scissors.

4. The fragmented DNA strands are then precipitated with rubbing alcohol, centrifuged, and washed.
5. The purified DNA fragments are re-suspended in an ionic salt buffer solution which chemically interrupts the hydrogen bonding interactions between the nucleotide base pairs along the DNA fragments.
6. Finally, the purified, denatured mixture is added to a microarray beadchip and incubated in an oven overnight to hybridize, or attach, the DNA fragments to the microarray beadchip substrate.

The microarray beadchip itself is an amazing piece of technology. **Figure 2** shows a beadchip that contains 12 sections which can be used to test 12 different individuals. If you look at the beadchip under a microscope, you will see that there are approximately 750,000 etched wells, with each well containing a tiny silica microbead about 1.5 micron in diameter. (A human hair is about 130 microns in diameter). Each microbead contains a different nucleotide sequence, about 50 base pairs long, that will attach to the DNA fragments and be used to test for a specific nucleotide at a specific location along the human DNA strand.

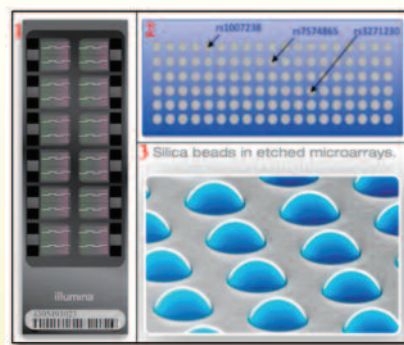


Figure 2: Microarray Beadchip
Source: www.illumina.com

Figure 3 summarizes the hybridization process:

1. The modified bead contains the short nucleotide sequences dangling from the surface.
2. The fragmented DNA solution is added, and annealed in an oven.
3. The complementary fragments of DNA that exactly pair with the synthesized nucleotide sequences attach to the microbead surface fragments.
4. The first nucleotide from the DNA sample fragment that is not bound to the microbead-containing sequence is called a single nucleotide polymorph (SNP—pronounced “snip”), in this case a G.

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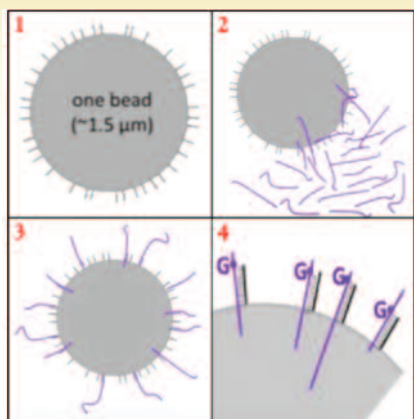


Figure 3: Hybridization of DNA onto the Beads
Source: www.illumina.com

Two double helical strands of DNA are derived from the chromosomes, one from the father and one from the mother. Each double helix has a single forward (+) strand and a complimentary single reverse (-) strand. This would lead to 4 single strands of DNA that could potentially be tested. However, the microbeads are specifically designed to capture only the forward (+) strand fragments; the reverse (-) strands are washed away and not used in the analysis.

Complimentary nucleotides from the father and mother are called alleles. If the alleles have the same nucleotide bases, for example a GG or AA, they are called homogeneous alleles; if the alleles have different nucleotide bases, for example AT or CG, they are called heterogeneous alleles. The testing companies record the allele values at specific SNP locations along your DNA strand and report these in the raw data from your DNA test, although they cannot identify whether they came from your father's or mother's DNA.

We now understand how the DNA is fragmented, purified, and hybridized onto the individual microbeads on the microarray beadchip, but how do they actually determine the value of the SNP? In short, they use a modified, fluorescence-labeled nucleotide tag - a molecule that emits a particular color light when irradiated with a laser. Each of the 750,000 microbeads is analyzed with a laser and individually counted by computer. Each microbead gives a value of one SNP in the DNA testing results.

It is important to know that you have two different family trees—your genealogical family tree and your genetic family tree. The relevant timeframe for a genealogical tree is the about 500 years because, in most cases, the paper trail runs out by then. On the other hand, the genetic family tree contains only those ancestors who actually contribute to your DNA. Some DNA is lost in each generation due to recombination or DNA swapping, which was discussed in Part 1. Depending on which DNA is lost, you may or may not match a cousin with your most recent common ancestor 6 or 7 generations back. All of your ancestors 3 or 4 generations back are represented in your DNA, but only about 10% of the DNA from your 32 ggg-grandparents (5 generations back) remain, for example, and there is only a 0.01% chance that all 64 of your gggg-grandparents are represented in your DNA. Your genetic family tree is therefore a subset of your genealogical family tree.

Now you have a basic understanding of DNA and how it is analyzed. Next we will focus on the four types of DNA tests, starting with mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) and how this can be used to uncover your genetic ancestry. Until then, happy genealogical and genetic hunting!

This article, expanded to include additional scientific explanation, will be placed on the AFAOA website, in the Publications/Special Collections section.

Please cut here



Election of Officers for 2020–2022

I, _____, AFAOA Member in good standing, cast the following vote for
(Please Print Name) the slate of officers presented by the Nominating Committee.

President:	John Clinard
Vice Presidents:	Joy Davis, David Neithamer and Elizabeth Neithamer
Secretary-Treasurer:	Barbara Giacomelli
Genealogist:	Liz Carlin Austin

YEA____ or NAY____

Date: _____

Mail completed ballot to: Paula Mackey,
5104 Golden Lane, Fort Worth, TX 76123

7

OR you may e-mail your vote
to mackeypaula@att.net

www.afaoa.org

Austin Families Association of America

Austin Families Association of America

Objectives

- To gather, preserve and disseminate Austin genealogies and Austin family histories.
- To establish a specialized database of Austin information that can assist genealogists and family members to learn as much as possible about their Austin heritage.
- To foster acquaintances and long-term friendships among the members of all branches of Austin families.

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