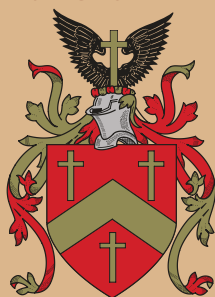


Austin Families Association of America

Spring 2020

NEWSLETTER

Fostering Austin Genealogy & Heritage



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Transcribing the research of Janet Austin Curtis • Southside Virginia Austins •

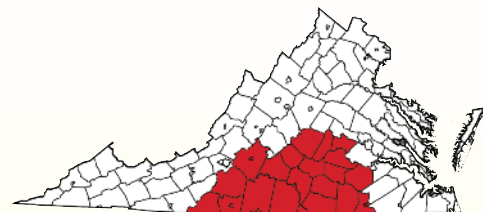
By Barbara Austin Giacomelli

I have been transcribing the contents of a 3-inch binder packed with Austin family history from the research of former AFAOA Genealogist Janet Austin Curtis. The work was at times tedious but mostly very interesting because it contained stories of Austin families in Pre-Revolutionary War and Colonial Virginia, some of which are recorded in the original British governed shires such as Henrico and James City (established in 1632).

Early Austin families recorded in the book include William Austin (Albemarle Co.), William, John and Thomas Austin (Bedford Co.), Isaac Austin (Botetourt Co.). A large section of the binder contains extensive information, compiled by Harold King Bowen, about John Austin married to Honor (Hannah) Love in Cumberland Co.

In 1724 a William Austin of New Kent Co. "was ordered by the Vestry...to maintain a road". He "had three sons by his first wife and one son by his second wife...and a daughter who was disinherited because she married against her father's will". Also of New Kent was Richard Austin who in 1662 received a grant of 280 Acres, as recorded by another prolific researcher, Charles Bullington. In the 1950s and 60s Mr. Bullington's work for the Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company afforded him the opportunity to travel around the State of Virginia. In a letter to Janet Austin Curtis he writes about his research throughout Henrico, Hanover, Amelia and Pittsylvania Counties. His research adds to the largest section in the binder—the section on Pittsylvania County. Among the many early Austin families there are: Isaiah and Lucy Austin, David and Elizabeth Austin, Joseph and Wealthy Prewett (Pruitt) Austin, Champness and Aincy Austin. This is where our Bartholomew Austin's branch first appears and there are letters back

and forth from researcher Jane Austin Bruckner to Janet Austin Curtis, Edith Austin Moore and Atty. William B. Austin.



Southside Virginia, has traditionally referred to the portion of the state south of the James River, the geographic feature from which the term derives its name. This was the first area to be developed in the colonial period.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southside_\(Virginia\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southside_(Virginia))

There were some very interesting historical facts, such as one taken from *History of Pittsylvania County* (p.3): "In June, 1641, Walter Austin, Rice Hoe, Joseph Johnson and Walter Chiles petitioned the General Assembly 'for leave and encouragement to undertake the discovery of a new river of unknown lands bearing west southerly from Appomattox River'" Their petition was granted in March 1642, with a right to enjoy all profit from their adventure for fourteen years. Noted at the bottom of this page is a question: "Walter, the forefather of the Southside Austins? 4-14-81 CEA" Who was this Walter Austin who explored an uncharted river in 1642?

Records show that on March 3, 1674

continued on page 5

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NEW MEMBERS

And their Earliest Known Austin Ancestors

James A. Austin

11991 Ridgeview Lane, Packer, CO 80138 j.austin@yahoo.com
(1) *Lewis b.1799 Dutchess Co., NY; Orris b. 1839 Ashland, NY; John E. b.1869 NY; Lynn F. b.1895 NY; Leland b.1919 NY;*
(2) *"John Austin of Greenwich, CT" b. 1615 Eng., Thomas b.1653 Stamford, CT; Jonathan b.1685 Greenwich, CT; John b. abt. 1725 CT; Elizabeth b.1764 CT, m. Hendrick Brandow (Elizabeth is the grandmother of Amanda Cargle who m. Lewis Austin)*

James William Austin

1400 Orange St., Melbourne Beach, FL 52951
"Jonah Austin of Taunton, MA" b.1598 Eng.; Jonah b.1630 Eng., Jonah b.1667 Taunton, MA; Ebenezer b.1697 MA; Nathaniel b.1730 MA, Nathaniel b.1760 MA; David b.1788 VT; William b.1846 VT; Wm. Henry b.1884 VT

Mary Austin Paine

2105 Plumosa Way, Indialantic, FL 52903
marystitch@hotmail.com
(same ancestors as James William Austin)

Karen Austin Richter

613 East Second St., Burkburnett, TX 76354
jmrkr@yahoo.com; *"William Austin of Kent Co., MD"...Elijah b.1774 Orange Co., NC; Absalom Chrisfield b.1812 Burke Co., NC;*

Nathan b.1838 NC; Audi Glenn b.1873 Bosque Co., TX; Aubrey Audi b.1896 Gatesville, TX

Georgina Davis

65 Road 3141, Aztec, NM 87410; inerlite@sisna.com
"Joseph Austin of Dover, NH" b.~1625 England d. bef.1663 NH; descent from two daughters: Deborah b. 1647/1652 (m. John Coffin) and Mary b.1653/1655 (m. Richard Gardner)

Diane Lee Kramer

2187 Guadalupe Bend, Boerne, TX 78006
dlkramer10@gmail.com; *Woodbury Hazelton b. ~1822 MA, d.1906 IA; Susan Francelia b.1850 Laurence, MA, m. Bamingham Lockey*

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

Alice Austin Martin
membership@afaoa.org

Please notice the renewal date on your address label.

Send your Dues (\$15 for 1 year or \$25 for 2 years) to:
Paula Mackey, 5104 Golden Lane, Fort Worth, TX 76123

2020 AFAOA Conference Williamsburg, Virginia

It's official. By vote of the membership, the location for our next AFAOA conference will be the beautiful and historic city of Williamsburg, Virginia. The weekend decided on was August 27th-29th, and we were all ready to complete arrangements at the Woodlands Hotel, which is right next door to the Visitor's Center of Colonial Williamsburg. UNFORTUNATELY, the rapidly worsening Coronavirus situation, and the large degree of uncertainty regarding the timeline for possible travel in the upcoming months has led to a decision by the Executive Board to hold off on going forward with Conference plans at this point. The entire country is being asked to restrict travel, and we don't know how long those restrictions will last. The demographic that is most at risk is the 60 and over age group, which is, in large part, the group that attends our conferences. If things change in the near future, we can revisit this and see if something can be put together, but it looks like the 2020 AFAOA Conference will be postponed until sometime in 2021. The Board is discussing ways to accomplish

business remotely that would have been taken care of at the Annual Meeting. We will investigate possible conference dates when things begin to settle down. Spring would be a wonderful time for our group to visit Williamsburg. But for now, please be safe and stay healthy.

Elizabeth Martin Neithamer
AFAOA Conference Chair



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We are nearing the 100th anniversary of our beginnings. The archival holdings of the AFAOA began with the research efforts of Edith

Austin Moore as she searched, starting in about 1922, for her Austin ancestors. Edith and her brother, Henry Warner Austin, founded the *Austin Family Association* in 1942. She compiled a collection of Austin genealogies leading to manuscripts for eight separate Austin lines. Other researchers have continued Edith's work. Notable individuals include Janet Austin Curtis, Bonnie Austin Bigolin and, most recently, Liz Austin Carlin with 20 years of service. Many of you have contributed your Austin family research, which has also been included. We have now established some 70 Austin family lines, with over 150,000 individuals in the databases displayed on our website.

In 1991 the name of our organization was changed and bylaws were adopted; in 1993 the first newsletter was published; and in 1995 our genealogy web site was launched. AFAOA has had no central office. Our officers and committee chairs, all volunteers, work cooperatively and remotely, mostly through web services. All deserve our thanks.

This is our 90th Newsletter. These Newsletters are provided first to our members, and later to our website visitors. You can read them online. Our history as AFAOA is recorded there. Thanks to our Newsletter team of Alice Austin Martin and Robert Osborn.

We have led in the field of Austin genealogy in the USA for many years. Always looking to the future, we intend to increase our online offerings by partnering with Allen County Public Library. More will be said about this as details are worked out.

We have also weathered seasons of national emergency, including the Great Recession and 9/11. Today's challenge,

offered by the Covid-19 pandemic, puts us in a new and intense storm. The 2020 AFAOA Conference was to be held in late August in Williamsburg, Virginia. Now we are considering moving the Conference to next Spring. The date will be announced long in advance so that you can plan your attendance. Thanks to Elizabeth Neithamer for her diligence and leadership in these matters.

Together, our organization will persevere. We will adhere to our mission and continue to move forward. Access to our resources, research and other services will continue via our website. Please visit us there often!

John Clinard
president@afaoa.org

What's New

Robert Austin of Kingston, Rhode Island

The computer software used for the databases on our website classifies persons as "living" if they do not have a death or burial date, and have a birth date that indicates an age of up to 110. The names of living persons are not visible, for privacy reasons, and therefore cannot be found in an AFAOA search.

So I started looking at individuals in the *Robert of Rhode Island* database that were born in 1909. There were about 100, and about 75 of those had no death information. I was able to find that information for all but about 15 of those, and in the process I have added lots of other people and data to the database. Since that was so successful, I am expanding the work into following years and am now through 1912. This will help people researching Austins in our databases to find Grandparents or Great-Grandparents whose names have not been visible. To see some of the updated information use the "What's New" link on our website Home page.

You have a good chance of finding individuals born after 1900 in the SS Death Index, in Find a Grave, and/or the 1940 Census. The nice thing about Find a Grave is that if the grave is linked to others you can find information about the family. I suggest that you use these resources in your research, for all of your family lines.

Art Sikes
robert.ri.compiler@afaoa.org



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Y-DNA Project

Three family lines in the Austin-Austen Y-DNA Project appear to have a common ancestor, because of close Y-DNA matches: Robert Austin of Rhode Island, Jonah Austin of Massachusetts, and John Austin of Virginia. These families all have a J2 Haplogroup, a very un-common Haplogroup for England. "John of VA", the smallest family, had just one test to 67 markers. "Jonah of MA" had all tests to 67 markers. Nine "Robert of RI" members had tests to 111 markers.

This upper panel of markers 68-111 appears to be very stable—just a few random mutations. It also appears that the families of Jonah and John have some common mutations and are probably closer related to each other than to Robert's family. One of the tests (#119551), which we think is a Jonah family member, had his Y-DNA upgraded to 111 markers. The results came back with three differences in the in the upper marker panel. Because of the stability of this upper panel that I have seen in both the Sikes and Austin projects I think that the common ancestor of Jonah and Robert is back 10–15 generations in England. This really excited me because we have 25 tests, all small families, that are in the J2 Haplogroup but have no documented connections to any of the three larger families, and none of the six that have been tested to 111 markers have these mutations. If further testing shows similar results, I think they are all part of the Robert of RI family. The test upgrade now being run on one of the John Austin family members could show that this family is probably part of the Jonah Austin family.

I will have the latest Y-DNA Project test results posted on our web site soon.

Art Sikes

dna.administrator@afaoa.org

Autosomal DNA Project

The autosomal DNA (atDNA) portion of our DNA Project now includes 167 participants. That's an increase of 21 since last reported. The analysis we offer is based on the Family Tree DNA (FTDNA) interface and search tools, including matching-tools, ethnicity charting and a powerful chromosome browser. Most have taken the Family Finder autosomal DNA test with FTDNA. Some have transferred their results, initially purchased from competitors such as 23andMe and Ancestry, to FTDNA.

Since all of our 167 participants have at least one Austin ancestral line, our AFAOA website and databases are quite useful in helping to identify Austin relatives. Because this type of testing and discovery of matching relatives works equally well for both men and women, some 30 % of

our participants are females.

Autosomal DNA testing alone tells us some useful things about our family history. For males, it can also be an informative supplement to Y-DNA testing, adding hints and proof of assumptions. However, the quest for a more complete family tree can be successful only through the coupling of genealogy research with these genetic test results. Rewards can be great when DNA test results complement standard genealogy research.

I would like to encourage you to experiment with DNA testing. Explore the links on our website's "DNA Testing" page. Send to me, or Art Sikes, any questions you may have. FTDNA (familytreedna.com) also has help available.

John Clinard

autodna@afaoa.org



Jane Austin Bruckner received the Martha Washington Medal and certificate at the February 22, 2020 George Washington Luncheon given by the *Mary Isham Keith Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution* (DAR) in Fort Worth Texas. The medal and certificate were presented by Ron Turner, President of the *Van Zandt Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution* (SAR), honoring a DAR member who researched and completed application papers for three men to become members of SAR.

Jane is a past Regent of the Short Hills Chapter, DAR, in Short Hills NJ, where she lived before she moved to Fort Worth. She is currently President of the *Governor Thomas Hinckley Chapter, Colonial Dames XVIIC*.

Jane served four years (2014–2018) as President of the *Austin Families Association of America*.

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Southside Virginia Austins, continued from page 1

James City court ruled in favor of Bartholomew Austin who leased land from the Cheskyake Indians: "It is the opinion of this court that the lease is good...that 150 acres of land be layd out...that said Austin has lett to lease more land than his lease expresses then he to pay the charges." I had never read that land was actually leased from the Indians. I wrote to Jane Austin Bruckner to see if this Bartholomew was related to the Bartholomew (b. 1715) in our family line of Austins. Jane said she did not know, but she sent me a quote from *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol 18, No. 4 (Oct 1910), "The Plant Cutter Rebellion of 1680" (page 361): "Somerset Davis and Bartholomew Austin, being convicted of Treason and executed, the Council declares that their Estates ought to satisfy all fees."; and from *Gloucester County, Virginia—A Timeline of History* (online): "1680—Bartholomew Austin is hanged in front of Gloucester Court House. He had participated in the destruction of tobacco plants in an effort to drive up prices during a time when tobacco prices were falling. As in many areas of Virginia, tobacco was the primary money crop in Gloucester County." Since these events were only six years apart, Jane and I think they likely refer to the same Bartholomew Austin.

What connection, if any, is there to the Bartholomew Austin born 1715 in New Kent Co. and married to Elizabeth Pigg in Amelia Co.? According to court records, Bartholomew in Amelia County was put "in the stocks" more than once for misbehavior and debts. He owned land and cattle, for which his stock marks were "a crop and hole in the right ear and 'flower de luce' in the left". There is much colorful history of Austins in Colonial Virginia!

One of my favorite entries in the binder is about Isaiah Austin b. 1759 Halifax Co., who fought in the Revolutionary War. "He entered the service of U.S. June 5, 1776 and served under Capt. James Shepherd...in the summer 1778 again entered service against Indians...under Capt. John Cox...for the purpose of hunting and overtaking the celebrated Cherokee Indian Chief 'Dragon Canoe'."

Legend has it that Dragon (or Dragging) Canoe got his name when as a young boy he wanted to prove he could go to battle. His father said he would have to carry his own canoe. The canoe was too heavy, so he had to drag it. (*Wikipedia.org*) He was "known to his enemies as 'The Dragon'...born around 1740 in East Tennessee...stricken and scarred by smallpox, he grew into a muscular, 6 foot tall warrior." (*HistoryNet.com*—"Dragging Canoe's War") He was not overtaken by Cpt. John Cox. "On April 2, 1781 during the Native American war...against the occupation of Middle Tennessee by a young United States of Amer-

ica...The great Cherokee War leader Dragging Canoe attacked Fort Nashborough [now the city of Nashville] ...on a bluff overlooking the Cumberland River, now known as the Battle of the

Bluffs". (*Middle Tennessee's Native American History: "Dragging Canoe, The Chickamauga Cherokees and The Battle of the Bluffs"*, Toya E. Heape)

The research done by Janet Austin Curtis is amazing. She began this work in the 1950s-1960s, well before we had the convenience of cell phones and computers and copy machines. She collected this information by traveling to State and County libraries, courthouses, churches and cemeteries to find court, marriage, tax and census records, pensions, and family histories. Information was also from personal interviews and letters. Everything was either handwritten, typed (on a manual typewriter) and, in a few cases, photocopied as that technology became available. We are fortunate that she had those resources available to her and the willingness to spend hours collecting and recording information that otherwise might have been lost.

In working with this binder for the last three plus years I have considered it a "treasure". I live in California, within the area that was affected by the destructive wildfire known as the CARR fire. As I was packing my car in preparation to evacuate, the fire had moved into the city of Redding and was burning out of control. I loaded up my hard drive and yes, the binder. No way was I leaving without the binder. It sat in my "to go" box with my water, peanut butter and crackers, dog food for Annie and cat food for Oscar. Needless to say, I did not have to leave, for which I remain very thankful. This binder and I have had an adventure together!

This transcription of Virginia research will be added to the "States Notebooks of Janet Austin Curtis", in the "AFAOA Publications" section of our website.

Other States Notebooks of Janet Austin Curtis are: Arkansas, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Vermont.



Isaiah Austin entered service for the purpose of hunting Cherokee Indian Chief Dragon Canoe

What Is This DNA Stuff and Why Should I Care?

Part 1. Cell Structure and DNA

By David R. Neithamer

So, you decided to order one of those DNA kits from Ancestry.com, My Heritage, 23andMe, or FTDNA, and now you've gotten the results back. What does it all mean? You see a variety of confusing jargon such as nuDNA, atDNA, mtDNA, Y-DNA, X-DNA, chromosomes, autosomes, genes, mutations, SNPs, STRs, haplogroups, nucleotides, alleles and wonder what they are and why they are important.

In order to understand some of these terms you will need a brief biology lesson, so first I will explain the basic structure of cells, the structure of DNA, and where DNA is found in the cells. This will be the foundation for understanding the testing procedures used to determine your DNA results.

DNA is an acronym for **d**eoxyribo**n**ucleic **a**cid. It is a very large bio-polymer found in the cells of all living things on earth including plants, animals, fungus, bacteria, and viruses. It is the blueprint for life as it holds the instructions for your body to grow, heal, and function. The longest strand of human DNA is over 247 million base pairs long; the shortest strand is over 49 million base pairs. Think of these base pairs as rungs on a ladder. The combined human DNA in each cell is over 3 billion base pairs and if you were to remove all the DNA from one of your cells and stretch it end to end it would be about 6 feet in length. Human DNA is about 99.9% similar to other human beings. That 0.1 % difference in our DNA is what makes us all unique individuals with a wide variety of physical, physiological, and behavioral differences.

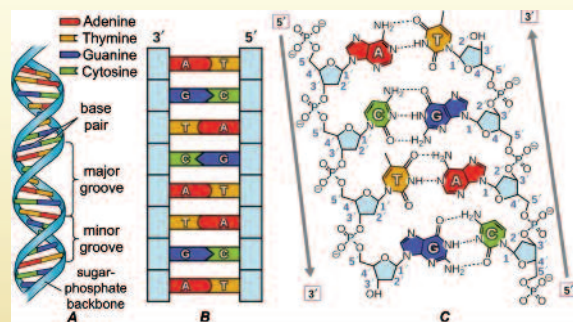


Figure 1. Double Helix Structure, Ladder View, and Detailed Chemical Structure

DNA has a double helical structure as shown on the left side of **Figure 1 (A)**. If you untwist the double helix you will see the corresponding ladder structure of DNA shown in the middle **(B)**. The actual chemical structure of the DNA molecule is shown on the right side of **Figure 1**

(C) with the sugar phosphate backbones connected to each other by paired combinations of 4 nitrogen-containing bases abbreviated A, T, G, and C. Due to their structure, A only pairs with T, while G pairs with C.

DNA is found in the cells of all living things, but where is it found in the cell and is all DNA the same? **Figure 2** shows a typical animal cell and the DNA is only found in two places within the cell—the nucleus, referred to as **nuDNA**, which is the control center for the cell—and the mitochondria, referred to as **mtDNA**, which are the powerhouses for the cell.

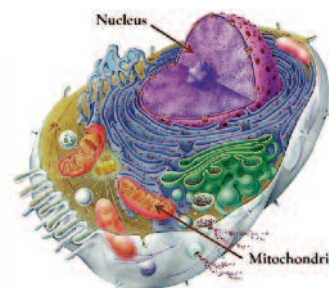


Figure 2. Structure of a Typical Animal Cell

Nuclear DNA does not just float around in the nucleus as long, twisted ladders, it ultimately self-assembles into structures called chromosomes. The DNA strands wrap around proteins called histones to form small, cylindrical structures. Think of histones as sewing spools with the DNA wrapped around the spool like threads. These “spools” condense the DNA and pack it into the larger chromosomal structures, which not only allows the DNA to fit neatly into the nucleus of the cell, just like storing spools of thread in a sewing box, but also protects the DNA strands from unintended cleavage and break-down.

Chromosomes normally have an “X” shape with a connection point half-way to two-thirds of the way along the chromosome. One “side” of the chromosome comes from the father and the other “side” comes from the mother. As shown in the karyotype in **Figure 3**, our genome contains 22 pairs of autosomes that have the same paired size and shape (labeled 1–22) roughly in order of their sizes based on their number of base pairs. Nuclear DNA found on any one of the 22 pairs of chromosomes is called autosomal DNA (**atDNA**). Our genome also contains 1 allosome pair of sex chromosomes, labeled with the letters X or Y, and the DNA that comes from these chromosomes is called X-DNA or Y-DNA respectively.

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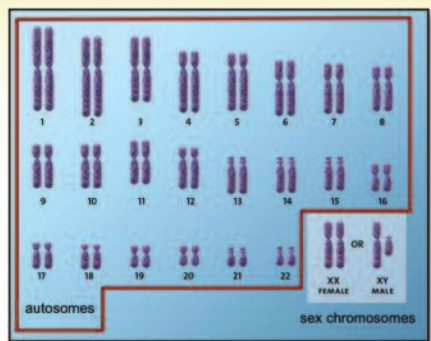


Figure 3. Karyotype of 46 Human Nuclear DNA Chromosomes

The second type of DNA is found in the mitochondria of the cell. Human mtDNA forms unique circular molecules, like a twisted rubber ladder with its ends connected to itself, that contain 16,569 base pairs (see **Figure 4**). Mitochondria produce energy for the cell using oxygen and glucose to create adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the cell's main energy source. In addition, they help regulate the self-destruction of cells and are necessary for the production of cholesterol and heme (a component of hemoglobin). Each human mitochondrion contains about 5 mtDNA molecules with a range of 1–15 and on average, each human cell contains about 500 mtDNA molecules.

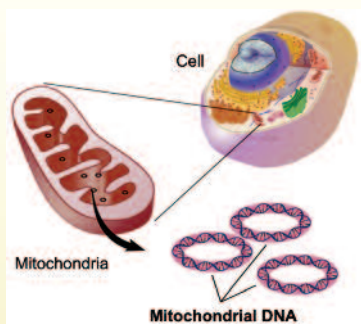


Figure 4. Mitochondrial DNA

We have all heard the saying, “It’s all in our genes”, when discussing the personality traits or physical characteristics of a person; but, what are genes? Genes are regions along the DNA strands that control the production of all the proteins in your body. Proteins are large, complex molecules that are responsible for nearly every task of cellular life, including cell formation, shape, movement, DNA maintenance, and regulation of cellular growth. Basically, they are responsible for everything a cell can do. Examples of proteins are hormones, such as insulin and estrogen, and enzymes such as lipases and oxidases.

We do not know exactly how many genes humans have in their DNA (20,000–25,000 have been identified or suspected) and they account for about 1.5% of our total DNA. The remaining regions (about 98.5%), that do not code for protein production, are called “Junk DNA”. However, that term is misleading, as recent evidence suggests that it contains “functional elements” that are necessary for regulating the genes. For us, the “Junk DNA” is the most interesting part because this is where most of the genealogical and forensics testing occurs.

Throughout our lifetime the cells in our bodies are constantly replenishing themselves through a process called mitosis - the normal division of cells, creating two identical cells which have the same DNA and same 46 chromosomes as the parent cell.

However, when the body creates the sex cells, sperm in men and ova (egg cells) in women, it uses a cell division process called meiosis that reduces the chromosome number from 46 to 23. During meiosis, chromosomes pair with each other and undergo genetic reshuffling of their DNA, called genetic recombination. This occurs only in atDNA and X-DNA; it does not occur in Y-DNA or mtDNA. Recombination is what leads to the differences between offspring from the same parents. Any mutations that occur during meiosis are important because they are passed down from parent to child.

Mutations are naturally occurring changes to the DNA strand (or mtDNA circle) over time. All DNA undergoes mutation—this is the basis for evolution—but the rates of mutation are variable. Some mutate after 10 generations while others mutate after 200 generations. Most mutations are benign, if they occur in the “Junk DNA” regions and can actually be very useful in identifying family connections if two individuals have the same mutation. However, some mutations can lead to disease or abnormalities if they originate in the genes, or protein coding regions. Mutations of this type lead to diseases such as cystic fibrosis, sickle cell anemia, Tay-Sachs, and breast cancer (brca1/brca2).

The next AFAOA newsletter will describe how the DNA testing companies use your saliva sample to identify your genetic cousin matches. Until then, happy genealogical and genetic hunting!



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

Austin Families Association of America

Austin Families Association of America
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Ocean Springs, MS 39564

Address Service Requested

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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