

# Strengthening LDS Family Organizations Through DNA

## **RootsTech 2019**

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**Session Title:** Strengthening LDS Family Organizations Through DNA

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## **Session Description**

This class will discuss how LDS family organizations can increase their membership and strengthen family relationships through using various DNA tests. Examples and results from two large LDS ancestral family organizations who have successfully used DNA tests to increase and enhance their association will be presented.

## **Genetic Genealogy**

Combining the use of DNA testing and Genealogy is a relatively young method of family research. ...In the late 1990's, there were several highly publicized cases, i.e.: the "Cheddar Man", Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemmings, and the last Czar of Russia's family, to name a few, in which DNA was utilized to prove or disprove relationships to people that have long since been deceased. The media coverage of these, and other cases, helped to bring DNA testing for genealogical applications to the commercial market in the year 2000. ...The International Society of Genetic Genealogy (ISOGG) was founded in 2005 by DNA project administrators who shared a common vision: the promotion and education of genetic genealogy.

[https://isogg.org/wiki/Wiki\\_Welcome\\_Page](https://isogg.org/wiki/Wiki_Welcome_Page); [https://isogg.org/wiki/Portal:DNA\\_testing](https://isogg.org/wiki/Portal:DNA_testing)

## **Sources about Genetic Genealogy and DNA Tests**

Links to the articles below can be found at:

<https://sites.google.com/view/ldsafa/resources/dna-research>

2017: *DNA - What, When, How, Why - FAWs for Beginners*, by Donna Rutherford. This article provides information and understanding about genetic DNA testing.

2017: *Still Not Soup*, by Judy G. Russell. This article presents the concerns, limitations and problems surrounding DNA ethnicity estimates.

2018: *DNA Testing*, by the International Society of Genetic Genealogy (ISGG). This article and others by ISGG contains extensive information about DNA tests.

2018: *Is DNA testing telling us more than we want to know? The untold story of Ancestry.com*, by Erica Evans, Deseret News, May 30, 2018.

### **What If A DNA Test Does Not Support Your Genealogical Assumptions**

Always remember that "Family is family, whether it is by blood, adoption or inheritance." If DNA testing does not support your genealogical assumptions, do not distance yourself from those who have supported and loved you during your life. Regardless of how you received or acquired your surname--whether it was by blood, adoption or inheritance--stay close to those who know and love you, and invest in strengthening family ties that connect you to those you call and know as "family".

### **DNA Tests Can Help Grow Family Organizations**

LDS family organizations can use the publicized calculated (or estimated) DNA relatedness of individuals who are identified as cousins by different DNA testing companies to grow and sustain their associations. This can be done through: 1) the organization contacting all similar surnamed individuals who are identified by various DNA testing companies as related to other same-surnamed individuals and inviting them to join and contribute their lineage to the organization; and 2) the organization encouraging all first-to-fourth generation "cousins" who various DNA testing companies calculate (or estimate) are related to other known family members to join and contribute their lineage to the organization.

### **Conclusions From DNA Tests By Two Ancestral Family Organizations**

Various DNA tests by two large LDS ancestral family organizations have shown that DNA tests can approximately or reasonably identify and publicize calculated (or estimated) relatedness between cousins back to about four generations. However, the accuracy of such calculated (or estimated) relationships between living individuals can be significantly different than what is genealogically provable. Also the shown geographical distributions and percentages of association to estimated ancestral locations can vary considerably between companies.