OWEN / OWENS / OWINGS DNA PROJECT

Sponsored by the Owen Family Association (OFA)

Welcome to the Owen DNA Project home page. This project was started in February, 2004 by the Owen Family Association (OFA) and is intended to cover all the common variants of the name, such as Owens, Owing, Owings, Owin, Oins, Oen. The DNA testing is coordinated through Family Tree DNA a nationally known DNA testing program. Owen Family Association member "Whit" Athey is the OWEN DNA project administrator.

Objectives

The Owen surname project has two main goals:

1. To obtain test results from American male Owens (surname Owen, Owens, Owings) who descend from each of the immigrant ancestors who have been identified. These results can show that such descendants are closely related, thereby confirming the family history research, suggesting connections between different branches of the family, and showing the way for focused traditional genealogical research.

2. For participants whose lines cannot yet be traced back to an immigrant ancestor, to suggest which early ancestor that further research should be directed.

Project Administrator

T. W. "Whit" Athey, Wathey@HPRG.com). For participation details and special Owen Family Association member discounts contact Whit.

Owen DNA Website

http://www.hprg.com/owen

Requirements

A Surname Project traces members of a family that share a common surname by testing the Y chromosome. Since surnames are passed down from father to son, just like the Y-chromosome, this test can reveal which Y lineage that a male Owen belongs to. The person to be tested must be male and (normally) named Owen/Owens/Owings. Females do not carry their father's Y-DNA. Females should recruit a male to be tested from the Owen line of interest to characterize this direct paternal line (father's father's father's...).

Tests Available

The Y chromosome tests that we use are tests of "short tandem repeats" or STRs—short sequences of DNA where a few bases get repeated over and over. These mutate much faster than individual bases at a single location, so are more useful for genealogical

purposes. The tests available cover several STR markers—12, 25, 37, or 67 markers. 25 is the minimum recommended and 37 represents a much greater value. The price for a 37-marker test will be about $140, but there have been steady reductions over the years, and occasionally sales will be offered. This price represents the project price, which is discounted somewhat over the regular public price. When you join the DNA project and place an order, the current price will be shown.

Males and females can also order an mitochondrial (mtDNA) test for themselves and characterize their matrilineal (strictly female) line. This test reports the actual sequence of the mtDNA. mtDNA is about 16,500 bases long, and the tests are labeled as follows:

"HVR1" which sequences the approximate region 16000-16500,

"HVR1+HVR2" (also labeled as "mtDNA Plus" or sometimes "high resolution" mtDNA), which addes the approximate region 1-540,

and "full genome sequence" or "FGS", which sequences the entire mtDNA.

The HVR1 and HVR1+HVR2 tests are useful for *disproving* genealogical relationships, but for discovering or providing evidence of relationships, the FGS is normally needed. In any of these tests at Family Tree DNA, the haplogroup or "clan" group of the mtDNA will be returned also, which can give some indication of the deep ancestry (thousands of years ago) of the matrilineal line.

A new test at Family Tree DNA tests about a half-million individual locations in the autosomal chromosomes (not Y, not X, and not mtDNA). When a consecutive string of thousands of these locations match exactly with someone else, this indicates a shared DNA segment that came to both persons by descent from a common ancestor. These tests apply equally to males and females and can show that you are related to another person, but not how you are related, because one cannot usually determine where DNA on the autosomal chromosomes comes from. This is in contrast to the Y and mtDNA tests which characterize a particular line. Second cousins and closer relationships can be demonstrated with high probability (99%) with these tests. Even third cousins have about a 90% probability of sharing at least one DNA segment. Fourth cousins still have about a 50% probability of having a segment in common, and fifth cousins about 20%. There is still a very small probability of detecting a 10th cousin. Even though the probability of sharing segments goes down with increasing "degrees of cousinship," the number of such cousins that one has goes up, making it likely that some distant matches will be found in a sufficiently large database of people. While for the Y or mtDNA tests, it usually doesn't matter whether one tests a grandfather or grandson, grandmother or granddaughter, for these autosomal tests, it is best to test the earliest generation possible for a particular line. But, of course, if you test only your mother, this will characterize her ancestry, but not that of your father. Testing yourself would show the ancestry of both parents, but with only half the probability of detecting a matching relative compared to testing a parent.

The autosomal tests would not be specific to your Owen lines, but if two people thought they were related through an Owen connection, the autosomal test could provide supporting evidence for this. Of course, a shared DNA segment could come from an unknown

additional relationship to that person and not the Owen connection, but if the only practical way for two people to be related is through an Owen connection, and the test shows that they are related somehow, then this can represent supporting evidence for the relationship actually being the one that was suspected.

Warning

One word of warning, any of these DNA tests can return results that are unexpected, and this can sometimes be upsetting. You may find that 30 years of genealogical work is suddenly disproved. With the autosomal tests, you might discover that you have people related to you in a closer manner than you thought possible—previously unknown siblings or half-siblings have been known to show up. Or, you might discover that you are only a half-sibling to someone you believed to be your full sibling. Make sure that you are really committed to the truth, wherever it might lead you, and psychologically prepared for any unexpected results. Such surprises are rare, but they have happened.