

## GSSCC - - DNA SIG - - handout - - Family Tree DNA Review

April 2, 2024

compiled by Gail Burk

Quick review - - Family Tree DNA offers a Y-DNA test (available only to men), mitochondrial DNA test (available to both men and women), and autosomal DNA test called Family Finder. Some testers have uploaded family trees. Family Tree DNA is good for determining distant ancestry, finding Jewish matches, and confirming the haplogroup of the male line. FT-DNA has a chromosome browser, and you can import raw DNA data from other companies and third party sites into the Family Finder database at FT-DNA.

Family Tree DNA now has a Family Matching Tool for analyzing your autosomal DNA matches at that site. It can help you determine which of your matches are maternal matches, and which matches are paternal. It can also help determine if you match some of your matches by way of both of your parents. This tool uses shared blocks of DNA to triangulate your matches, rather than just utilizing the previous "In Common With" FT-DNA tool or clustering, which means it can help you find matches along a specific ancestral line.

To use this tool, you need one or more confirmed matches and a family tree. You will need to use the family view of your tree, rather than the pedigree view, when utilizing the Family Matching Tool. Your match list is updated each time you get a new match. Each time you confirm a specific relationship to a DNA match and link that match to your tree, it affects your matches page and helps to identify more matches in that same group with the same block of shared DNA.

In linking a match to your tree, you need to make sure that the match person is already in your tree, in the correct position, and that you have identified the correct path for how you and your match connect. If the match is not already in your tree, you will need to add the relevant information and generations in order to add the match to your tree. Then you link the match to your tree. Voila! This allows you to use your match list much more effectively.

If your match happens to be related to you through both parents, it is recommended that you not link that match to one parent in your tree, or you may miss important matches in the other parental line. Analyzing your newly-added matches from the Family Matching Tool can help to identify additional surnames in that line to research, surnames you might not have been aware of before using

the Tool. Using the Family Matching Tool and linking identified matches to your tree can also help you sort out issues of common surnames in your tree; that is, you can be more confident that you have the correct Miller or Smith in the proper place in your tree.

For more information, see the video tutorial by Martin McDowell from RootsTech 2024. Here's the link:

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/using-the-family-matching-tool-at-familytreedna>

At Family Tree DNA, you will also want to enter your earliest known ancestor on both your direct father's line and your direct mother's line; that is, you will go back from your father's father's father, etc., to the earliest known ancestor in that line. Do the same for your mother; that is, go back from your mother's mother's mother, etc., to the earliest known ancestor in that line. This information can be added by going to account settings in your profile, then clicking on the genealogy tab, and clicking on "earliest known ancestors."

Enter the dates of birth and death for each earliest known ancestor, and country of origin for each. Be sure to click on the links for "paternal ancestral location" and "maternal ancestral location," which will provide the means to list a specific place of birth. FT-DNA automatically locates a pin on the map using the GPS coordinates for that place. Remember to save your information. You can then look at the Matches Map to see where some of your shared matches' ancestors shared a geographic location - - which can provide clues for your research. There are matches maps and Ancestral Origins reports for your autosomal matches, and also for your Y-DNA and mitochondrial matches.

There are other interesting reports available at FT-DNA. If you have taken a Y-DNA test and/or a mitochondrial DNA test, you can view Haplogroup Origins reports. There is a Public Haplotree that shows countries of origin for everyone in that haplogroup, including your DNA matches, but also those in the same haplogroup who are not on your DNA match list. The Big Y Block Tree shows how Big Y testers relate to each other. The Big Y Time Tree shows when each line branched off from an earlier line. The Haplogroup Story shows the "genealogy" of your haplogroup: when it was formed, its earliest known location, and its migration.

The Group Time Tree includes all Y-DNA group members entered either individually or by subgroup. This Tree can provide clues as to how closely related subgroup members are to each other, and how closely related the various subgroups themselves are to each other. For Y-DNA testers, this underscores the value of joining one or more Y-DNA groups at FT-DNA. By joining a haplogroup subgroup, or joining a surname group, you might find clues from the earliest known ancestors listed by others in the group.

For more information about adding earliest known ancestor information to your account at FT-DNA, see the link here:

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/how-to-use-earliest-known-ancestor-updates-to-improve-your-genealogy-research>

Roberta Estes has also written a good blog post about the importance of entering your earliest known ancestor information at FT-DNA. You can read her blog post at DNAeXplained here:

<https://dna-explained.com/2020/07/07/earliest-known-ancestors-at-family-tree-dna-in-3-easy-steps/>

At Family Tree DNA, you will want to save your DNA record for future generations. You can do this by going to your account profile, and updating your contact information. The contact person should always be the DNA tester, who is the owner of the data. If the tester is deceased, then the contact person should be the person who manages that account or the account beneficiary.

Just as we do for other valuable assets in our lives, we should designate a beneficiary for our DNA account at FT-DNA. You can do this by going to account settings, then clicking on the “beneficiary information” tab. If you manage the DNA accounts of other people, you want to make sure that you have entered your contact information by clicking on the “kit manager” tab.

Find information here about updating your contact information, designating a beneficiary and updating your kit management information:

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/save-your-dna-record-for-future-generations>