

Emerging Use of Surname Databases in Conjunction with DNA; What does the Future Hold?

The inherent value and use of surname databases cannot be overstated but emerging is their use in conjunction with DNA tools to further clarify and provide proof of our genealogical connections.

Surname databases are known to be useful in doing genealogical studies. They can provide useful information on names, places, dates and geography. These databases have relied on the diligent research and contribution of members of the Featherston(e) family around the world. We all benefit from their hours of digging through ancient records and interviewing family members and for putting that information forward to be shared by other members of the clan. We can also be thankful that a single individual, W. Paul Featherstone, choose to make this his life's work.

But now the Featherston(e)'s has an added dimension--the use of DNA in conjunction with those surname databases which are maintained by Paul. The study of DNA has been elucidated during the lifetime of the author. How exciting to be a participant in this new emerging field of "Genetic Genealogy". By using the new tools of this discipline, we can trace Featherstone(s) back through history using Y-DNA. Y-DNA follows the male line through the centuries. Currently we have about 30 male Featherston(e) participants worldwide. This database of Y DNA data will eventually tell us when and where the Featherston(e) branches were formed. If you are a Featherston and haven't submitted your Y-DNA results or want to know more about this contact the surname study. The goals of the study are:

The project aims are many- the main objective is to see if all Featherstone's no matter what the variant are linked back to one line.

Others include.

1. Are Featherstone & Featherston linked.
2. Is there a Link between Featherstonehaugh and any of the shortened versions.
3. Where the USA Featherston(e)'s link back to the UK Featherstone's
4. Do The UK Featherstone's link back to a common ancestor.

The newest tool in the DNA toolbox is autosomal testing. This DNA test allows participants to determine at the genetic level who we are related to in the past 4-6 generations. This tool, in conjunction with traditional genealogy has helped adoptees find their families and for genetic trees to be able to conduct health studies and patterns of migration and multiples other reasons.

Examples of DNA testing for adoptees and individuals who have been "lost" to their families can be given from my experiences. I was contacted by a fellow genealogist who had "fostered" a young man in California who did not possess the surname but did match me at a significant level. This young man was in the foster care system in California—a far piece away from where I grew up in Missouri. By utilizing the Featherston(e) database and the DNA results we were able to determine that he was the grandson of my father's sister. By drawing on the databases, I was able to provide the young man with a partial history of his ancestors which include many patriots and statesmen. Important information for a young man to know.

I am currently working with an adoptee who is utilizing the free DNA tool "GEDmatch". This database takes submissions of raw autosomal data from all the various testing companies and can show graphically each chromosome and where the matches occur. This individual matches significantly myself, my siblings, my nieces and a first cousin—all on the Featherston(e) branch. Unfortunately, the

matches are separated by about 4 generations but using the genealogy databases to find locations and dates we can get several steps closer to identifying her family. Won't surprise me if it turns out to be a Featherston. These are a couple of Featherston contributors further down her list of Featherston's I do not know. This is an on-going project for me.

So test yourself and your family members. The results will be important now and for future generations. How I wish I had tested more of my father's family. Contribute your stories and data to Paul to enhance and already remarkable set of Featherstone database. Working together we can all contribute to the depth, science and the technology of our Featherstone Family. Future generations will thank us.

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