

Newspapers and Genealogical Research

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The Newsletter of the Barbados Genealogy Group (BGG)

Connections

Newspapers and Genealogical Research



“A forum for family researchers in Barbados and the diaspora to stay connected through news, articles, tips

BGG Objectives

- Encourage and promote family research.
- Foster communication, cooperation, mentorship.
- Educational talks, discussions and workshops.
- Share resources.
- Develop presentation skills.
- Advocacy in family research.
- Provide encouragement and support to young people in researching their family

Mission Statement

“To inspire and encourage Barbadian-related family history research and to foster the development of individual and shared identities.”

Have you included newspapers in your search for your ancestors? If you haven’t done so as yet, you should consider it. Newspapers can be helpful in providing information, which may help to enhance that found in other sources. To illustrate, let’s have a look at the Barbadian Newspaper of 22 November 1854, which carried a notice of jurors returned to serve at the Court of Common Pleas on Monday, November 27th.

What information can we glean from this list? The notice included the names of thirty individuals drawn from nine parishes – St. Lucy, St. James, St. Peter, St. Joseph, St. Thomas, St. Michael, St. Philip, St. Andrew and St. John; with their actual addresses. The occupations given for the jurors were diverse and included: saddler, mechanic, shopkeeper, cooper, proprietor, shoemaker, boatman, carpenter, labourer, blacksmith, fisherman and planter.

If your ancestor appeared on this list, you are made aware of his address and occupation in 1854 and the fact that he was a juror at the Court of Common Pleas in 1854. This last piece of information may send you to research what qualified an individual to serve—income, property? Thus further adding to your family story and knowledge of Barbadian history.

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>OCCUPATION</u> | <u>ADDRESS</u> | <u>NAME</u> | <u>OCCUPATION</u> | <u>ADDRESS</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| James Dowding | Planter | St. Lucy | William Goding | Shop keeper | Wharf, City |
| Mingo Gaskin | Planter | Near Paynes Bay, St. James | James William Hinckson | Planter | Nr William Peterkins, St. Joseph |
| John William Hinckson | Fisherman | Near Paynes bay, St. James | John R. Moore | Blacksmith | Upper Bay Street, City |
| James Thomas Jones | Planter | Stevensons, St. Lucy | Joshua B. Nurse | Planter | Fair View, St. Philip |
| George Moore | Blacksmith | Roebuck | Edward J. Phillips | Planter | Allmans, St. Lucy |
| Christopher Norville | Boatman | Speightstown, St. Peter | Edward Henry Shepherd | Planter | Cottage, St. Lucy |

Partial list of Jurors Returned to Serve in the Court of Common Pleas on Monday 27 November 1854

*Source: The Barbadian Newspaper 22 November 1854
Barbados Department of Archives*

A Bajan's Journey to Sweet Salone , Part 1

Kevin Browne

Life is a journey. When I was in England and wider Europe back in the early days, the locals always asked me “where in Africa do you come from?” Many would ask if I had lost my language, or did I had my name changed? These were nice friendly people, asking reasonable questions, for I was very different to them and they could see this - people by nature are curious.

We all walk around with a picture of ourselves in our head, however other people's perspectives depending on the country that you are in, can be very different.

A lot of people also ask me if I am Jamaican? To me this is a reasonable question and I always reply, “I am from Barbados”. We need to asked more and better questions.

I love the quote by Edward Deming “In God we trust. All others must bring data”.

I have been to several countries in West Africa, including; Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Gambia, and Guinea to learn more about West Africa in general and how it fits into Barbadian and the greater Caribbean culture.

Alongside visiting these countries, I have taken various DNA tests to try and delve deeper into my origins. What I have found is that not all tests are equal, as various tests trace different genealogies.

In November 2021, I took an X chromosome test with African Ancestry and found out that my maternal lineage lies with two of the

biggest tribes in Sierra Leone, the Mende and Temne.

That same month I joined a group called the *Temne Abara Nation*, a heritage and cultural preservation society made up of members who share ancestry with the Temne people from Sierra Leone. Their mission is ‘the restoration and preservation of Temne heritage and culture among Temne descendants in the diaspora.

My decision to join this group, as opposed to a Mende group was partly informed by my experience on the Island of Carriacou some years earlier, where I found the Temne culture of Sierra Leone to be well preserved. There are only two places in the Caribbean that I know of where there the African culture is well preserved; the Akan of Suriname and the Temne of Carriacou.

As a result of my travels to much of West Africa, I have become very familiar with the food, culture and tribal customs. Living with local people for most of this time, instead of staying in hotels, has for me led to a more a richer experience.

On the 19th of November I headed out to Sierra Leone. Although I had already been to many parts of West Africa, this trip was different. It was far more personal to me, knowing that Sierra Leone was where my maternal roots lay.

I remember being in a meeting one



Potato Leaf and Rice

day with several Caucasian Americans. They were 8th generation and were able to say from where they originated - one guy said his family was from Ireland, the other Italy and another was from Belgium. I could not say anything at that time about myself but now I had solid confirmation of my roots and links to Sierra Leone.

I arrived in Freetown about 8.30pm, got my bags and headed straight to Newton, an area in the western district where I was to spend the next 3 weeks. This is local Temne village and that night we ate potato leaves with rice, an excellent welcome meal. I also met my fellow travellers – all of them African-Americans. I was the only Bajan.

Day 2: We met the Paramount Chief, Yabome Posseh Conteh in person, spending the day on her compound, getting familiar with local customs and its people. That morning I had the best eggs ever with snapper and plantain.

To be continued...

Pedigree collapse affects many of our personal family trees and can cause confusion in our research. Many of us have come across it at one point or another, perhaps without even realizing it. Imagine that you've used a DNA testing company and have found a DNA match of a person who is estimated to be a 3rd cousin to you. However, no matter how hard you try, when you compare trees with this individual you can't figure out where the connection is. Typically, you would share roughly about 73cM of DNA with a 3rd cousin, descending from a common pair of great-great grandparents. There are other possibilities as well (such as a 2nd cousin once removed). However, after exhausting these routes you are left scratching your head. Could it be a case of an adoption? A family secret? Or did somebody make a mistake in their tree? We all know that DNA does not lie... or does it? In this case, and especially on an island nation like Barbados, the culprit may be pedigree collapse.

What is Pedigree Collapse?

On the surface, it is assumed that each of us has what is known as a Binary Tree. Starting with yourself at the bottom and moving upwards, it would have a place for 2 parents, 4 grandparents, 8 great-grandparents, and so forth, continuing exponentially. If you were to look at this on a piece of paper it would take the shape of an upside-down triangle. Pedigree collapse happens when the parents of an ancestor are related to each other (sometimes completely unknown to themselves). As a result, instead of the binary tree being made up of completely different individuals, relatives show up in

more than one spot. If you were to look at this on a piece of paper it can start to take on a diamond shape over time because the numbers of unique ancestors which you have decreases. The more instances of pedigree collapse, the sharper the diamond shape becomes.

For example, a person would usually have:

- 8 great-grandparents
- 16 great-great grandparents
- 32 great-great-great grandparents
- 64 great-great-great-great grandparents,

With each of these people being unique individuals, their names would appear once only on your tree.

However, imagine that your great-grandparents Arthur and Mary were first cousins. If you were to draw out your tree with Arthur and Mary, you would end up with a smaller number of unique individuals, with Arthur and Mary's shared grandparents and great-grandparents showing up in multiple spots of your tree. For unique individuals you are left with:

- 8 great-grandparents
- 16 great-great grandparents
- 30 great-great-great grandparents
- 60 great-great-great-great grandparents

Now imagine that you do not have 1 instance of pedigree collapse in your tree, but 2. Perhaps Arthur and Mary are on your mother's side of the family, but now on your father's side of the family you find an instance of a niece marrying an uncle, or a

set of 2nd cousins who married. Your family tree would start to break away from that inverted triangle shape even further, collapsing your tree. When one or more lines of your family tree "collapse" into each other you are left with a smaller ancestral tree. Simply put, when the number of your ancestors stops doubling, you have found pedigree collapse.

What is Endogamy?

Endogamy is pedigree collapse, but on a much larger scale. It takes place repeatedly in multiple generations. Endogamy tends to happen in small communities that are segregated from other populations whether it be for religious, social, or geographical reasons. Historically, some religious endogamous populations are Ashkenazi Jews, Mennonites, and the Amish. A great example of an endogamous group built on a social structure would be the Royal families who have intermarried among themselves for centuries. As for geographic, think of areas that are isolated from a broader population base, such as a small village on a mountainside or on an island (not unlike Barbados). There is no threshold number for knowing when pedigree collapse crosses over into being considered endogamy.

Does this mean that some Barbadians may come from endogamous family lines? You would need to research your own tree to find out, but it is a possibility to be aware of.

Continued on page 4

How Pedigree Collapse Can Affect Your Tree Cont'd

By

Anita Corbin-Bartholomew

Now, what about that 3rd cousin DNA match?

DNA does not lie, however it can sometimes mislead us. The algorithms which the DNA testing companies use go under the assumption that you come from a straightforward binary tree and do not take pedigree collapse into account. Regarding your matches, the predicted cousin relationship is determined by the amount of DNA which two people share. If there are multiple lines of inheritance with which you share with another person, it can skew the numbers. In other words, you may show as having a closer relationship with another person because you share more family lines and have less unique individual ancestors in your tree, not because you are more recently related. As a result, that person who is showing up as your 3rd cousin, may in fact be your 4th or 5th cousin, with the most recent common ancestor being a few more generations back than you originally thought.

Personally, I find that the more my own family tree grows, the more like a spider web it becomes. I suspect that many other Barbadians will have the same

experience. I've encountered pedigree collapse in my own tree on multiple lines and many of these individuals would not have known that they shared ancestry. Nobody likes the idea of having pedigree collapse in their family, but the truth is that mathematically speaking we all have pedigree collapse at some point. For most people, it may be 10 to 15 generations back in time or further. For Barbadians, coming from an island nation with a limited population base, it may be more prevalent and from more recent generations, such as 3 to 6 generations back. When researching, it is important to keep in mind that the descendants of pedigree collapse may sometimes (but not always), share a higher percentage of DNA than normal with each other. A relationship estimate like "3rd cousin" may be in fact be something different than what it appears to be on the surface.

NEWS

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 16— The Barbados Trinidad Connection — Prof. Pedro Welch

May 18— Understanding and Using Vestry Records for Genealogy—Dr. Dan Carter

BGG Past Presentations on YouTube—Playlist

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLWhAN50mfrKE94fITPncultFGUu5FRidg>

Back Issues of Connections : <https://barbadosgen.wordpress.com/connections-newsletter/>

We welcome your articles for our upcoming newsletter scheduled for May. Please submit via email to

library@barbmuse.org.bb

Executive of the BGG >>>

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| & Betty St. John | <i>Floor Members</i> |

The Barbados Museum and Historical Society was established in 1933 by an Act of Parliament. It is housed in historic buildings which were originally used as the military prison of St. Ann's Garrison.

The Shilstone Memorial Library is a research library, which is open to the public Monday to Friday from 9 am until 4:30 pm, by appointment only. Appointments are in 2 hour slots.

For further information contact Harriet Pierce, Librarian .

Address: St Ann's Garrison, St Michael, Barbados.

Phone: 1 246 538 0201

Email: library@barbmuse.org.bb

