What Do I Do With My DNA Results….in 10 Easy Steps
By Roberta Estes (copyright 2008)

The most common question I receive from people whose DNA results are returned to them is "what do I do now"? I've put together 10 Easy Steps in plain English that even beginners can navigate and understand.

Through www.dnaexplain.com, I provide a more extensive analysis as a custom service for my clients, but this overview should be something everyone who tests at Family Tree DNA does with their results. This is where I begin with every client. For purposes of discussion, I am using Mr. Payne's data as a reference point.

1. After logging on to your personal account, look at the User Preferences link on the left hand side navigation bar. See if you are set up to match to the entire data base or just specific projects. If you want to match within projects only, then click that box and then go down to the bottom of that page and click on the "update" button. If you don't click on update, the values aren't changed.

For each person I work with, I look at who they match in all of the projects that are members of. In your case, you are a member of both the Lost Colony Yline and the Lost Colony mtdna, but you haven't had the mtdna testing done yet, so you really shouldn't be a member of that project because you don't have any mtdna results. I don't know if your mtdna results would be relevant to the Lost Colony, but that is a different discussion. In looking at the projects you are a member of, I would suggest that you also join your surname project, the Payne project, and see who you match within that project. You can join several projects simultaneously without having to "unjoin" others.

When you have your selection set to show "matches within projects only", you can then select the project you want to show matches to by clicking on the group's dropdown box and selecting the project you want to see. For example, if you were a member of both the Lost Colony Yline and the Payne projects, both would show and you could toggle between the two to compare your results to those of each project separately.

When you are done looking at matches within projects, then you should go back to the user preferences link and select the "match against entire database" option and then click on "update" again at the bottom of the page. This option will then show you all of your matches within the entire family Tree DNA database regardless of project. You have already filled in the information for your oldest known ancestor in that line, but for those who haven't this is the place to do this as well.

As an aside, if you discover that you match someone within a project, but their name does not appear on the "entire data base" list, it's because they have their user option set to "compare within project".

2. Just so you know, your project results are always shown on the Family Tree DNA site at http://www.familytreedna.com/public/LostColonyYDNA/ for any project you're a member of. As you know, this complimentary Family Tree DNA site does not allow any information other than just the DNA results within the project. Nelda provides this service on our private Lost Colony website but she has to download your data and set it up and such, plus add your info, so it takes awhile.   Our Lost Colony website it at http://www.rootsweb.com/~molcgdrg/dna/surnames.htm

Using the above link, scroll down to see the surnames. This is the DNA info from the page PLUS whatever info you send her and whatever historical information is available for your surname as well. This is why it's important to provide research info, because otherwise, if all that is available for display, the Family Tree page would do just fine. Ours is intended to focus on additional research.

3. On your Family Tree DNA personal site, go to the link that says "My Matches". This will show you who you match depending on the option selected relative to the "match against projects" combined with the project name in the drop down box, or the "match against entire data base" option selected above.

In your case, when selecting the "projects only" option and the Lost Colony YDNA project, you match a few people on the 12 marker panel, and all of them but one has tested for 25 or more markers. This means that you can ignore them in the 12 markers section, because if you really match them, you'll see their name again in the 25 marker section or the 37 marker section, or whatever the highest number of markers is that they have selected. This is important, but first, let's talk about the person with 12 markers who did not test for more markers.

Because haplogroup R1b is so prevalent, about 70% of England, and higher in some areas, over 90%, it is typical to match people on the first 12 markers, but when more markers are tested, you no longer match. We call this phenomenon matches that "fall apart". So, knowing that for your haplogroup, it is possible that the 12 marker match is a true match, but without more testing, it's not terribly likely. Now, if the surname was similar to Payne, then I'd say it might warrant a bit more interest, but it's not, it's Alford.

Now, back to those who you match on 12 markers who have tested for more markers. You'll recognize these by the (Y25), (Y37) or (Y67) by their names that indicate the number of markers they have had tested

Scroll down and look at your 25 and 37 marker sections. In your case, you have no matches there yet in the Lost Colony project, so you know that you really

DON'T match the 5 people who were listed in your 12 marker section and who tested more markers. So for now, you don't match anyone in the Lost Colony project.

4. On your User Preferences page, set your preference back to "match entire data base" (and click "update") and let's do this again. Now you have 168 matches. What I do at this point is scroll down immediately to the 25 and 37 marker sections (since you had 37 markers tested) and see what is there. This is kind of like skipping to the end of the book, but this is OK:)

In your case, you match on 25 markers to Jimmy Carter (you never told us you were related to the former president) and another Payne. You can tell that neither of these men tested at 37 markers because there is no little (Y37) or (Y67) beside their names. The e-mail of both of these people is provided to you, so if I were you, I'd immediately contact Mr. Payne and share your genealogy with him and see if you can determine where the two of you connect, because you clearly do.

But wait, you don't have to contact Mr. Payne for his pedigree chart, because he was kind enough to upload his Gedcom file so you can see it. Click on the little orange box to the right of the page on Mr. Payne's link that says FT. Look there, it's his pedigree chart and his oldest ancestor was born in 1803 in NC and died in Texas.

I would encourage everyone to upload your Gedcom file. Family Tree DNA strips out any personal info and just lists the name, birth year and location which is enough to know if you want to contact the person or not for more info.

But back to your page. Look now at the 12 marker matches. You know you can disregard the ones that have the (Y25 or 37 or 67) beside them because they don't show up below.

In your case, you have too many matches to be seen on one page, so you need to click on the little "see all results" on the top orange bar of your results where it says 168 matches.

This allows you to see all 168 of your matches. Look at the surnames for those without the (Y25 or whatever) notation and see if there are any here that you'd like to follow up with. Check for the orange FT box to the right for pedigree charts or click on the e-mail addresses to send e-mails to individuals who you are interested in contacting for more information or to share.

OK, now you're ready to learn more.

5. If you haven't already done so, go to the Gedcom link on the left navigation bar and upload your Gedcom file from your genealogy software program.

6. Go to My Maps page. This is a really neat new feature. For you, this may not be so useful, but for some it is extremely enlightening. In order for your information to show on this map, you need to enter the longitude and latitude for your earliest ancestor. For you, this would be John Payne if you know where he was born in England. If not, then don't enter anything. If your oldest ancestor was born in the US, then put that location. After you step through that...and they prompt you and have help with the longitude and latitude coordinates, go back to the My Maps page. You do not have to have your coordinates entered to use the My Map feature, but if you want your information included, then you need to post it.

This is a very powerful took in mapping migration and helping to determine where your ancestors may have originated and migrated from. As an example, if your Payne match had entered his longitude and latitude and you could see that you matched him in Sussex England, that geographical location would be very important info for you genealogically.

Let's say you matched men of other surnames, but they all tracked to a line along Hadrian's Wall, then that might tell you something about those men. They might be Roman soldiers or perhaps related in another way.

When the map appears with the balloons (you must enable pop-ups for this feature if you have them disabled), you can see where others match you. You have several 12 marker match balloons, but none at 25 or 37 yet. Many people don't enter their longitude and latitude if they know where their ancestor was from, as they don't realize how powerful and important this information can be when combined with the info from others who match.

You can click on a particular balloon to see who it represents and also they are color coded for exact matches, 1 different, etc.

7. Go to the Haplogroup link on the navigation bar. At the top of this page, it tells you whether your haplogroup has been predicted or tested for individually by a special test called a SNP (sounds like snip) test. Most R1b folks match perfectly to someone else who has already been tested on the markers they use to estimate haplogroup, so you are "predicted", which is what I would expect. This is very reliable at Family Tree DNA because their data base is so large.

Your haplogroup is your ancestral clan. We know from this clan that you are not Native American, not of recent African origin, not Eastern Asian, and that your clan did emerge in Europe, probably in Anatolia. You can learn a lot about where your family came from before the use of last names and into deep history by using this information and various tools in different data bases. But for now, I'm just going to talk about this tool provided by Family Tree DNA because each of us has access to it with our results.

Every haplogroup is broken into sub haplogroups. Main haplogroup R1b, has R1b1 and that has been further divided into R1b1c, which is what you are predicted to be. So looking at the list on matches below on that page, you can focus on R1b1c. However, a very interesting tidbit is held here for you. You match a lot of R1b1c6, so if you were to test further, this is what I would expect they would find as a further breakdown of your haplogroup. Early in DNA genealogy testing, R1b1c used to be a wonderful haplogroup to be a member of because there WERE matches, but now there are so many matches that they are often prohibitive in number, so further testing limits the number of matches to those that are useful. You have seen that already demonstrated in your own results by the difference between your 168 matches and the 2 you actually match at 25 markers. Haplogroup deep clade SNP testing does the same thing for your haplogroup. If you are interested, you can purchase a test which will more clearly define your haplogroup so you'll know what haplogroup to watch for developments that will tell you (in time) where your ancestors were, went and what their life was like hundreds and thousands of years ago. To find more information, click on the button on the top of your haplogroup page that says "continue for more information". This shows you on a tree the various haplogroups you could be a member of and the ones they'll be testing for.

Back on your haplogroup page, you can scroll down to the bottom to see what it says about the various haplogroups. The information displayed on this page shows you exact matches on 12 markers that you have to people in the various haplogroups. These people have all been proven. Remember the more mutations, the least likely you are to be a real match considering what happened to your 12 marker matches and how many fell apart.

While this isn't perfect, it still gives you a great overview of where your ancestors were.

If you'd like to know more about haplogroup R1b1c(6), go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R1b#R1b1c6 and start here. You'll stay busy for days.

8. On the navigation panel, go to the Recent Ancestral Origins tab. This is a private research data base combined with information in the Family Tree DNA database based up on how one enters their ancestor's earliest known location (on the User Preferences page). In your case, you know that your ancestor was from England, but is that really true for sure?

Look at the percentages, as that is the power of this tool. In your case, for exact matches, you show a match to 45 of 14434 for a total of .3% in England, 60 of 7979 in Ireland for .7% and 28 of 6421 in Scotland for .4%. So perhaps your ancestors spent time in Ireland as well. There is more analysis that can be done here, but not using just this data base.

9. Click on "My Results". These are the raw numbers that are used both for this data base and any others you might choose to enter your data into. Be sure to click on "understanding your results" for an explanation. One thing you should do is to upload your results to Y-Search, the free data base provided by Family Tree DNA that allows people who have used all testing companies to enter their data and to compare it.

10. To do this, click on the box on the navigation panel that says Y-Search.

You want to select the option that says "create a new user". Be sure to write down your user ID and password, as the only people who can get to that info if you lose it are at Family Tree DNA. After you create the user, your results are automatically uploaded for you, so no typing is required and so you can't make typos. After you upload the info, then you want to search in two ways.

First, search by surname shows you how you compare to other Paynes and other similar surnames. They you can search by results for matches based on number of markers tested and number of mutations. If someone that matches you tested with another testing company, using Y-search is the only avenue you have for finding that match.

This is the end of the Easy 10 Step Lesson. I hope you have learned a lot about your DNA and your matches and how to use the tools. This is really just the beginning of delving into your genealogy and ancient history, the tip of the iceberg.

If you'd like a personal analysis of your DNA results, feel free to visit www.dnaexplain.com or contact me, Roberta Estes, at restes@comcast.net.