

DNA and Genealogy: A Source Guide to Understanding and Using DNA Testing

DNA testing is a relatively new science that is quickly gaining popularity with genealogists. Researchers are able to use DNA test results to confirm stories about family ties and to connect distant family lines, and DNA is especially useful for African American ancestral research since there is a lack of sources for tracing family connections before the Civil War. DNA testing can help genealogists work further back in time and find more ancestors when the paper trail of regular sources leads to a dead end.

There are several types of genetic tests available through private companies. Please note that the South Carolina Room staff does not conduct DNA testing or interpret the results, and there are limitations to DNA testing due to cost. Below is a guide to sources that explains how DNA testing works, how it is beneficial for genealogical research, and how to use the results to add to a family tree. The resources listed here will offer a solid introduction to genetic research, and they explain how other researchers have used DNA information to advance their ancestry study.

Books

Finding Oprah's Roots: Finding Your Own

SCR 929.1072 Gates

This book explains how Oprah and other African Americans have used DNA testing to learn more about their ancestry and family trees.

Trace Your Roots Through DNA: Using genetic Tests to explore your family tree

GEN 929.1072 Smolenya

Written by two renowned genealogists, this is a guide to how genetic testing can be utilized to research ancestry. The book addresses what kinds of genealogy questions can be answered through DNA testing, and what different types of tests are available on the market.

The Genetic Strand: Exploring a family history Through DNA

SCR 929.2 Ball

Charlestonian Edward Ball's story of how he used DNA testing and other genealogical research to determine if he had African American ancestry. Genetic Strand chronicles Ball's family history but also offers in-depth explanations of how he conducted his genealogical research, and how he used his DNA results to prove familial connections. It is a good introductory narrative for anyone just beginning to study family history and the uses and benefits of genetic testing.

Family History in the Genes: Trace your DNA and Grow your family tree

GEN 929.1 Pomery

This guide was produced for the National Archives and includes chapters on how DNA testing works, how to choose a testing company, different types of tests and how the results apply to genealogical research. It also has a helpful glossary of scientific and genealogy terms.

Other Sources

Ancestry.com This is a subscription-based genealogical database available to patrons while they are at the library. The Ancestry Library Addition available in the South Carolina History Room has a 'World Family Tree' section where users can submit genealogy and family connections, and some also list DNA results in their sources. Individuals can also purchase a monthly subscription for their home computers if they have internet access; the Ancestry Plus edition for private subscribers had a specific DNA section as of July 2009.

Vertical files- DNA and Genealogy. These are files with articles and other useful clippings organized by subject. The Charleston files (CVF) on DNA and Genealogy have information on different kinds of tests and genealogical resources. Please ask the SCR desk for access to the files.



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