

Discover missing pages in your family's story

Resumption this week on PBS of "Finding Your Roots" with Henry Louis Gates Jr. will inspire more Americans to become involved in personal genetics, a field offering unprecedented insights about who our ancestors were and how we became who we are.

In our nation of immigrants who often relocate great distances from one generation to the next, it's easy for the threads of memory to break, severing us from even the relatively recent past.

And that's just fine with many. They either are habitually incurious, too busy just getting by, or certain their families did nothing of interest.

Many, however, positively hunger for such knowledge. People ignorant of their family's past are like pages torn from a long and complicated book. They might be interesting, but they have no context, narrative or plot. You can't understand who the characters are or why they behave as they do. Being part of long, messy stories is what makes us human. Without your family's tale, you'd just as well be a rabbit hiding in its hole.



Matt Winters

What it can and can't do

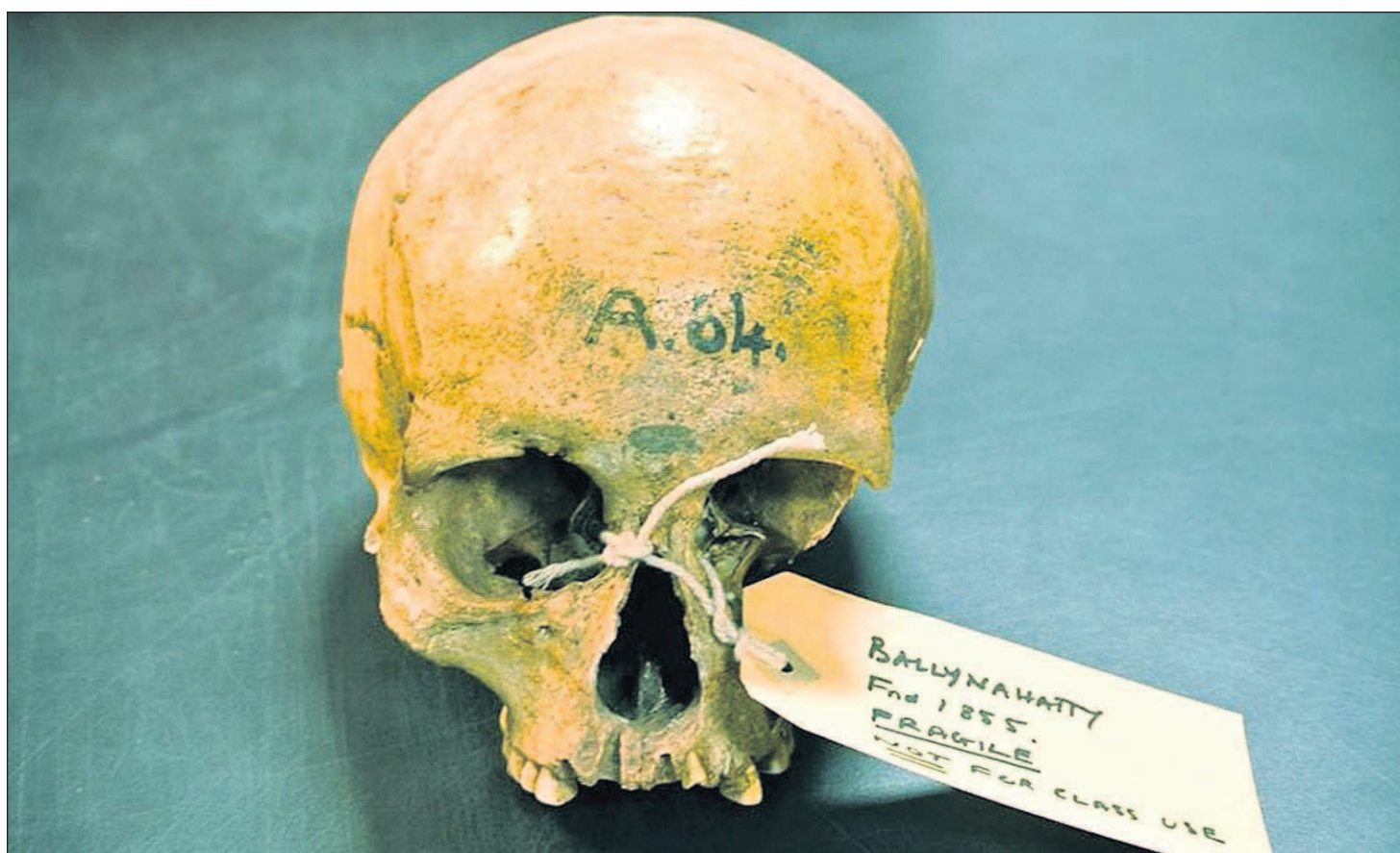
Fleshing out these stories takes old-fashioned genealogy — genetics technology isn't a magical shortcut. Only with exceptional luck will a genetics test prove a link to some long-lost relation who has already accurately reconstructed part of your family narrative.

What genetics testing can reliably do:

- Find cousins you didn't know about.
- Sometimes overcome genealogical "brick walls" — gaps in the paper trail between a known ancestor and someone further back.
- Tell whether you, a parent or more distant ancestor was adopted, or born as the result of an out-of-wedlock affair.
- Determine an approximation of your racial composition.
- Offer solid clues about what nations or regions some of your ancestors lived in.
- Prove or disprove relationship with someone with the same last name.
- Find out what percentage Neanderthal you are.

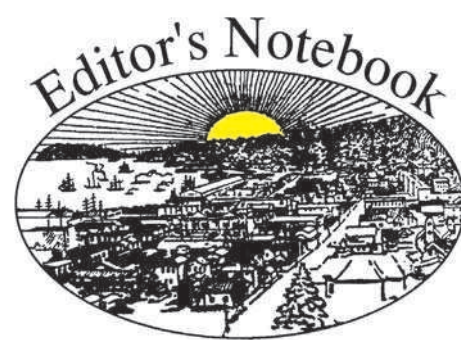
These uses will be incredibly meaningful to some and completely boring to others. The fact is, though, that even someone who is 100 percent certain they know all there is to know about their family is likely to be in for surprises. If you don't want your assumptions challenged, it's best to not ask questions or take tests.

Genetics sounds scary to many. They fear it is too technical to understand, or too expensive, or that their personal data may be hijacked or backfire in some way. If you're genuinely interested in answers to compel-



This 5,000-year-old skull of a female farmer recovered in 1855 from a Neolithic tomb near Belfast provided DNA that helps reveal the deep ancestry of the Irish people.

Daniel Bradley/Trinity College Dublin



Fleshing out these stories takes old-fashioned genealogy

other companies do the same. FTDNA is one of the best and largest personal genetics firms. Perhaps its strongest suit is the depth of its database, with hundreds of thousands of testees being able to compare results and learn from one another.

- 23andme (23andme.com): Originally affiliated with Google but now freestanding, its only test, which costs \$199, is a great value, a sort of "one-stop shop" for paternal, maternal, autosomal (mixed) genetic lines, and some health-related information.

- BritainsDNA (www.britainsdna.com) formerly Ethnoancestry: Tests cost about \$290 for men and \$250 for women. One of the first outfits I used, this company has undergone corporate transitions since then, but still is a credible choice, particularly for we with mainly British ancestry.

- AncestryDNA (ancestry.com): Basic test \$99. The big dog in online genealogy, Ancestry also offers DNA tests. A large testee database and good corporate support, but I've found their suggested genetic matches to be useless.

- YFull (www.yfull.com): \$49 fee. A Russia-based interpretation service, they take DNA raw data obtained by clients from other companies and crunch it for you. Probably not terribly helpful for beginners, but worth bearing in mind if you become as obsessed with the topic, as many do.

- In addition, though I haven't used them for this purpose, National Geographic has been a major player in DNA testing via its Genographic Project, now somewhat tied with Family Tree DNA. Its \$149 test provides interesting results about ethnicity, but is less useful for other purposes.

- Oxford Ancestors (www.oxfordancestors.com): About \$290. A prestigious name but low value for the money.

I could write a whole additional column about recent scientific findings about the genetic composition of the British Isles and other places. For one, much to their mutual chagrin, a study finds that France was the biggest source of DNA for most in England's prosperous southeast (see www.tinyurl.com/DailyMailDNA). For another, there isn't a single, unified type of "Celtic" ancestry. For example, typically Irish DNA originated from prehistoric migrations from the Middle East and Eastern Europe (see www.tinyurl.com/GuardianIrishDNA).

This is the golden age of genetic and genealogical finding. It will make you a wiser, more philosophical person. It's as close as we're likely to get to having a time machine. So get after it.

—M.S.W.

Matt Winters is editor and publisher of the *Chinook Observer* and *Coast River Business Journal*.

Cornering the anger market

By GAIL COLLINS

New York Times News Service

Let's talk for a minute about Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump.

Both of them were in New York this week.

Sanders made a speech about Wall Street to a large and boisterous crowd. They cheered his idea of taxing financial transactions and using the money to make public college tuition free. They booed Wall Street executive bonuses, and loudly joined in to finish some of Sanders' sentences. ("Congress does not regulate Wall Street ... WALL STREET REGULATES CONGRESS!")

"Second-biggest crowds, in all fairness," said Trump at a meeting Wednesday with The Times editorial board. He added, of course, that his were way, way, way bigger.

Both men's campaigns are about outrage. Sanders wants the country to rise up against the special privileges that keep making the richest 1 percent richer. Trump rocketed to the top of the polls by railing about illegal immigration. The saddest thing about this presidential race so far is that the Trump approach has gotten way more attention.

To be honest, Donald Trump as a presidential candidate is fascinating, in a perverse way. The effect is sort of like being at a cocktail party listening while a half-tipsy celebrity blathers on about his stupid co-star and the way the Academy Awards are fixed. Trump doesn't drink, but his speeches do have that sloppy off-the-cuff quality. He'll start to talk about an issue and then abruptly announce: "So who knows? It's a theory." Then he boasts about his polls. ("I could talk about these suckers all night long.")

There's something a little refreshing in a candidate who does all his bragging upfront. And let's acknowledge that the number of typical American voters who want to listen to a call for the return of the Glass-Steagall Act is not as large as the number who want to hear Trump rant against environmental regulations by describing his affinity for hair spray.

But Sanders has such better villains. In his Wall Street speech, he talked about businessmen who get away with the financial equivalent of murder. Wachovia, an American bank later acquired by Wells Fargo, "aided Mexican drug cartels," Sanders said, by laundering billions of dollars in their cash. "Yet the total fine for this offense was less than 2 percent of the bank's \$12.3 billion profit ... and no one went to jail. No one went to jail."

That seems a lot more outrageous than Mexican workers sneaking across the border — even the ones who are portrayed, in Trump's TV ad, by a film clip of Africans trying to fling themselves across a fence out of Morocco. (Hard to believe that less than two years ago, I was making fun of a candidate for the Senate who ran an ad in which an office worker in South Dakota was impersonated by a French model. We've come so far.)

Maybe the problem with Sanders' speech was that after he warned Wall Street and corporate America "if you do not end your greed, we will end it for you," he seemed to feel compelled to say how he would do that. Which did require some discussion of the Federal Reserve and banking regulation.



Gail Collins

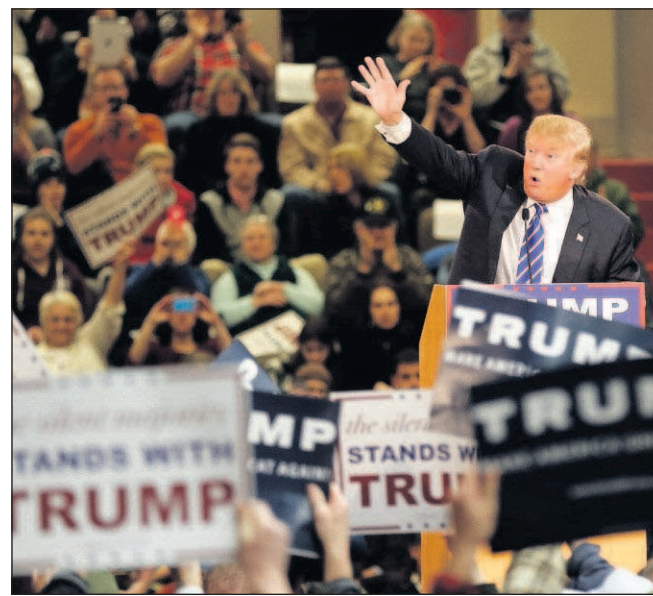
Trump seems to feel absolutely no compunction to explain how anything would work. His defense program is basically, "We're going to make our military really, really, really strong." He's going to get rid of all the immigrants here illegally — the actual procedure for making this happen is hazy — and then force the Mexican government to pay for that wall. ("Trust me, Mexico will pay.") And he's going to reduce the trade deficit with China ("the single greatest theft in the history of the world ..."). At the editorial board meeting, Trump said he'd use his stupendous deal-making powers to force the Chinese to raise the value of their currency.

And what if the Chinese don't comply? Trump said he'd impose a tariff. How much of a tariff? Maybe 45 percent.

This seemed like a new number. A few years back, Trump called for a 25 percent tariff on Chinese goods, and early in the campaign he mentioned a 35 percent tax on Mexican-built cars. Do you think he's been re-running the figures during campaign flights? Another possible answer would be that he just makes this stuff up as he goes along.

There is, Trump says, "a great anger out there. ... A lot of people say that my campaign has picked up on that, and I didn't do that intentionally." Perhaps that's true, in the sense that he never sat down and wrote out an Anger Plan. He just keeps repeating whatever seems to get a rise out of his listeners. He always was a great marketer.

It's not all that stunning that he's so far ahead in the national polls, given the quality of the Republican competition. But it's depressing that he's cornered the anger franchise when his targets exclude America's own wealthy and powerful.



Jim Cole/AP Photo

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump waves to a cheering crowd during a campaign stop Tuesday in Claremont, N.H.



Mikayla Whitmore/Las Vegas Sun

Michaela Lash is held up by her mother Elana Lash at a rally for Democratic presidential candidate U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., at the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas on Wednesday.



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