

CUMMINGS CHRONICLES

FOR THE DESCENDANTS OF ISAAC CUMMINGS (1601-1677)

**SAVE
THE DATE!**

**SATURDAY
DECEMBER 10, 2022**

**ICFA Online Genealogical
Symposium and
Annual Meeting**

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THEODORE M. WENDEL, BRIDGE AT IPSWICH



PRESIDENT'S NOTE

by DAVID ROLAND

There are many quotes and sayings that apply to genealogy. Some make us think, others make us laugh. Some do both. My approach to family history falls somewhere between Sue Monk Kidd's "Stories have to be told or they die, and when they die we can't remember who we are or why we're here," and George Bernard Shaw's "If you cannot get rid of the family skeleton, you may as well make it dance." I suppose we apply similar thinking to *Cummings Chronicles*.

In this edition we bring you a blend of personal stories featuring Darla Jarvis' Civil War second great grandfather and Deb King's Wild West ancestors. Bob Cooney has written an excellent research piece about how to use autosomal DNA methods to prove old family connections. John Cleary provides a Q&A update about findings to date and future opportunities for our now seven-year-old Y-DNA Project, and we have a fascinating piece of science reporting about a mass Bronze Age migration of people from what is now France into England and Wales.

You will also find reports about growth in our membership, a list of new members, an update on plans for a 2023 ICFA Reunion in Massachusetts, and a "Save the Date" announcement for our second online Annual Meeting and Educational Symposium on Saturday December 10, 2022.

Over the summer our Vice President – Membership Darla Jarvis handed over the office reins to our longtime Historian Beth Rosenquist. On your behalf I want to say a warm thank you to Darla for her many years of remarkable contributions that also included Newsletter Editor, Reunion Chair, Secretary and President, and to Beth for assuming the key membership position.

I also want to thank our terrific Board Secretary, Sharon Sorensen, who will be stepping down by the Annual Meeting. Please let me know if you will consider serving in this important role and want to know more about what is involved. We do our best to keep the work load for our officers at an enjoyable and respectable level.

As you will read in Steve Hesler's Reunion Report, your Executive Committee has authorized Steve to plan a 2023

in-person biennial Reunion in the Boston area. The dates are July 20-23. Members who have been around for a while know that over the Association's quarter-century plus we have returned to coastal Massachusetts north of Boston every four years with another location in-between. We were last there (in Salem, Massachusetts) in 2019. Since there was no physical 2021 biennial Reunion during the first year of Covid we will simply be staying on schedule in returning to our most popular Reunion location, the American starting point for all of our Isaac Cummings Family connections.

And on the subject of future ICFA activities, we're pleased to report that on Saturday December 10 we are planning a second Zoom-like online educational symposium and ICFA Annual Meeting. As was the case last November with our well-received initial online gathering, it will feature experienced genealogists presenting programs of special interest to our members. Longtime member Kimball Cummings will be handling execution of the event. More details and reminders will be sent in the coming weeks. Don't forget that videos of last year's three Zoom presentations are available to members at our website, isaaccummingsfamily.org. Just click on the link at the top of the home page for more information on gaining access. For now, Save the Date – December 10!

These days family Reunions come in different sizes and configurations, so December 10 might be thought of as a sort of online mini-reunion. On Page 9 you will learn about a recent in-person Isaac Cummings family gathering in Idaho. Regional and local get-togethers of Cummings "cousins" have long been of interest to our organization and recent board discussions have led us to a renewed focus on the importance of identifying, encouraging and perhaps even supporting regional events for Isaac descendants clustered in various parts of the country. We are also aware of past events in Michigan, Wisconsin and Colorado, and hope you will let us know of any Cummings get-togethers or family concentrations that might be the basis for one.

We hope you enjoy your new edition of *Chronicles*. We hope it motivates you to continue actively researching your Cummings lines. But if you are just getting started and enjoy learning about your ancestors but don't have the inclination or time to do all your own digging, remember that Mark Twain once offered an alternative approach. "Why waste your money looking up your family tree?" he quipped. "Just go into politics and your opponents will do it for you."

Cheers,

Bronze Age Mass Migration into Britain from France

By Carissa Wong

The largest analysis of ancient DNA to date has revealed a mass migration of people from what is now France into England and Wales during the late Bronze Age, which may have spread Celtic languages to Britain.

Two large migrations of people into Britain were previously known, the first taking place around 6000 years ago. The ancestry of these people came mostly from a group known to archaeogeneticists as Early European Farmers, with around 20 per cent from another group called Western European Hunter-Gatherers. This migration led to the replacement of most of the existing local hunter-gatherer ancestry.

Around 4500 years ago, at the start of the Bronze Age, there was a second migration that consisted of descendants of livestock farmers from the Pontic-Caspian steppe – grassland that spans from present-day Bulgaria to Kazakhstan. Ancestry from this group eventually formed at least 90 per cent of the genetic make-up in Scotland, England and Wales.

People living in England and Wales today have more ancestry from Early European Farmers than people in the early Bronze Age did, suggesting a third migration from Europe may have occurred more recently.

Ian Armit at the University of York in the UK and his colleagues sequenced the genomes of nearly 800 individuals from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age whose remains were found at archaeological sites in Britain and in western and central Europe. They looked at the proportion of Early European Farmer ancestry in these ancient people over time.

The team found evidence of a third mass migration into Britain from France that took place between 1000 BC and 875 BC, during which Early European Farmer ancestry increased from around 30 per cent to roughly 36 per cent on average in southern Britain by the late Bronze Age. In the Iron Age, this stabilised at nearly half of the ancestry in populations of England and Wales.

“We’ve always known this period of the middle and late Bronze Age was a period of tremendous connectivity between Britain and central and western Europe,” says Armit.

“Prior to this study, we would have thought of the movement in terms of individuals and small groups, traders and [people looking for metal]. But the results show society was far more mobile than we thought – large sectors of society were on the move. Societies were very interconnected across the English Channel in a manner we hadn’t really appreciated before,” he says.

The findings help shed light on a debate about when Celtic languages were first spoken in Britain. “The most established theory, based on the analysis of ancient object styles, is that Celtic languages came in during the Iron Age with Celtic speakers from continental Europe,” says Armit.

But the new evidence supports a competing idea, based on linguistic studies, that Celtic languages expanded into Britain earlier, in the middle to late Bronze Age. However, we can’t tell from someone’s DNA what language they spoke, says Armit.

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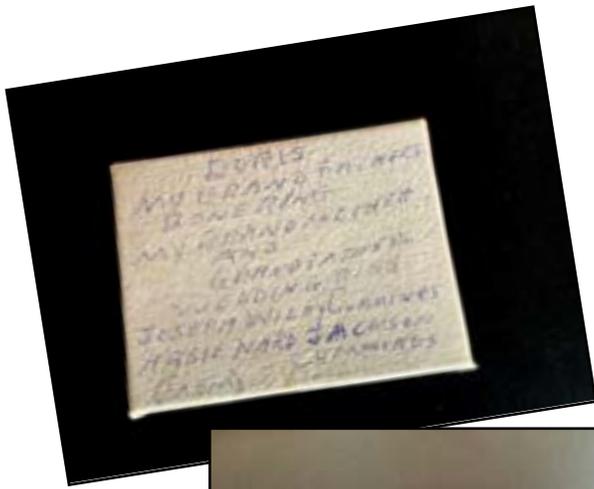
The Bone Ring

By Darla Jarvis

When my mother, Doris Sandell, passed away in 2016, she left a household of her belongings along with a rented storage locker filled with her mother's possessions. Adelia Abbie Cummings, my grandmother, came to live with Doris in 2000. Her things were placed in storage and remained there until my mother's passing. They included a kitchen table set, dishes, side tables, a bedroom set, a couch and chairs, several boxes of books and personal goods. One item stood out—a small jewelry box with my Grandmother's writing on the lid. It contained something I had never encountered.

Adelia Abbie Cummings was born in Albany, Maine, in 1905 and died in 2004. She was the daughter of George Washington Cummings (1856-1932) and Cora Emma Cummings Cummings (they were cousins), who was born in 1870 and died in 1909 when Adelia was only four. In the 1910 Federal Census she and her school-age siblings are reported as living with their father and being cared for by his 92-year-old mother Charlotte. When Charlotte died the next year, Adelia was sent to live on the nearby farm of her maternal grandparents, Abigail Ward Jackson (1842-1921) and Joseph Wiley Cummings (1837-1916) and was raised by two of their unmarried children, her Aunt Sibyl and Uncle Allen. This farm is now known as the Bumpus Mine, in itself a story for another day.

Joseph Wiley Cummings was born in 1837 and died in 1916. He was a farmer and 23 when he enlisted in the Civil War in the fall of 1861 and joined the newly formed 10th Maine Volunteer Regiment Company G in Portland, Maine, upon leaving his home in Woodstock, Maine. The 10th Maine was ordered to Baltimore on October 6 with orders to guard the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad as the only line open to Union Troop movement in the area. Below is an excerpt of a letter describing their activities published in a local newspaper, the *Lewiston Daily Evening Journal* on December 19, 1861:



ABOVE: BOX WITH HANDWRITING, BONE RING, AND PHOTO OF JOSEPH WILEY CUMMINGS

A private letter from Stephen R. Estes of Co.H, (Auburn Artillery) 10th Maine informs us that this company "has returned to head quarters at the Relay House, having been out two weeks on picket service. The company will rest two weeks, and then return to the same service. The duty required of us is very responsible, and the position held by the 10th Maine Regiment is called a post of honor. Several regiments have occupied the same position, and have not given the Government satisfaction, and have been ordered away. Our regiment has 9 miles of Rail Road to guard, our company having 1 1-2 miles in which is the Great Stone Bridge across the Patapsco River, which has eight spans each 40 feet, and cost over half a million dollars. It is a splendid structure and all important to our Government, as all troops and supplies have to pass over this railroad on account of the rebel blockade on the Potomac, We have built a small fort here which is called Fort Dix (named for Gen. John L. Dix) mounting six rifled cannon and capable of defending against one or two thousand Infantry...

In May 1862 the 10th was assigned reconnaissance duty in Virginia around Martinsburg and the Luray Court House and then involved in operations in the Shenandoah Valley. In August they fought in the Battle of Cedar Mountain where Joseph was wounded in the hand but not discharged. This was followed by two important and very bloody actions, the Second Battle of Bull Run and then Antietam. After further action the unit was mustered out of service May 8, 1863.

According to the history of the 10th Maine, Co G lost a total of 9 officers and 127 men to battle or disease. A battle could leave hundreds if not thousands of dead on the field. What the men saw on the battlefield were the horrors of bodies left behind by both retreating and advancing troops. There was no time to bury the dead properly. The victor was responsible for the burying and often pits were dug and bodies buried together. Haphazard lists were kept of the location, names if known and the number of dead buried. Soldiers grew more and more concerned with being buried and listed as unknown and began writing their name on a slip of paper to carry in a pocket or on a piece of wood strung around their neck. Looking for something more permanent, some men began purchasing or making items that would last.

For Joseph, that something more permanent was a ring. Not just any ring but one that had been carved from bone. It was among the contents of the small jewelry box with my grandmother Adelia's handwriting on the lid that I found among my mother's belongings. She had written:

*DORIS
MY GRANDFATHERS BONE RING
MY GRANDMOTHER AND
GRANDFATHERS WEDDING RING
JOSEPH WILEY CUMMINGS ABBIE WARD
JACKSON CUMMINGS
MOM*

I don't know if Joseph had this ring made or made it himself. It has his initials and unit, JWC 10th ME, front and center with a US Flag to the left and an American Flag Shield to the right. In researching the use of bone rings in war I learned that the bone ring identifier is the precursor of the modern-day military dog tag. An article by Katie Lange on defense.gov about dog tag history says that "By the end of the Civil War, more than 40% of the Union Army's dead were unidentified. To bring that into perspective, consider this: Of the more than 17,000 troops buried in Vicksburg National Cemetery, the largest Union cemetery in the US, nearly 13,000 of those graves are marked as unknown.

To know that Joseph not only wore this ring in battle but wore it home alive is a moving thought for me and my family. I'm sure glad I found that small jewelry box in my mother's storage locker. 🍀

Y-Chromosome Project Update

We're pleased to bring you this project update interview with John Cleary, who with Tim Cummings has been a consultant administrator of the ICFA Y-DNA Project since 2018. John lives in Edinburgh, Scotland, and has presented at both our recent Salem, Massachusetts, and online Zoom Reunions. He gives talks on genetic genealogy around the UK and Ireland and is co-author of *Tracing Your Ancestors Using DNA* (ed. Graham Holton, 2019).

What are the most valuable and surprising results from the ICFA Y-DNA Project since it was started in 2015?

Valuable: we have discovered a clear and unique Y-DNA pattern which identifies descendants of Isaac. Anyone who matches that pattern in a 37-marker test upwards is descended from Isaac's line.

Surprising: there have been some big surprises, mainly for people with other surnames who matched that pattern. Some might have heard some rumours about a Cummings ancestry, while others had not the foggiest idea they were descendants of Isaac. For some of these, we have cracked their descent from Isaac and we told some of those stories at the online Reunion last year. Others, we're still working on, and if we can, we will discover how they match with the Cummings, as they are all part of the family of Isaac descendants.

We're also working on building a skeleton Y-DNA tree for all the sons and grandsons of Isaac. We've already found unique identifying markers for the grandsons Isaac/John/John and Isaac/Isaac/John, and we'd like to discover the same for the other grandsons. But we need more people with known genealogies back to Isaac to come forward and do the advanced Y test.

What can we hypothesize from Y-Project results about the genetic origins of Isaac's earliest English male ancestors and also the geographic history of Isaac's ancestors during the several hundred years before he left coastal Essex for Massachusetts ca. 1635?

Isaac's Y haplogroup is R-DF27, and that goes for all his direct Y-line descendants. This is an ancient R1b grouping, which may possibly have originated in the Iberian peninsula, and then spread through what are now Spain and France and into Great Britain. But we have to be cautious about when this particular Isaac-line of R-DF27 entered England. It could have been any time from before the Iron Age and the Roman empire right up to the Norman conquest. We just don't have enough close matches yet to get close to knowing.

The Isaac Cummings branch seems pretty isolated, and so without other related family lines we can't make a call about whether its ancestors were Normans, Anglo-Saxons, Romans or something else. There is one parallel family line we know about. Some of our project members might see a match named Hill. We know the Hills are the only matches who don't descend from Isaac but form a parallel branch.

We know a bit about how the Hills descend: the match is from London, but his family, like Isaac's, were yeoman farmers in England in the 1600s. Isaac's father's farm was near Mistley in Essex, while the Hills came from near Buckingham, about 120 road miles to the west. These two places are not especially close even today, and in the Middle Ages they would have been pretty distant. So it is not clear how these two families connect with each other, but putting together what we know about how fast DNA mutates, we can make a reasonable guesstimate that the two branches that eventually take us to the Hills and the Cummings split round about 1300 –give or take a century or so.

What next Y-DNA and traditional research steps can we take to learn, even prove, more about Isaac's English family history?

Isaac's family has been researched to the 1560s by earlier members of the Association. Maybe there's more documentary research that could still be done, like using records of medieval manors in Essex or Suffolk to see if more records of the 'Commins' name can be traced.

Unfortunately, there seem to be no collateral descendants of his brothers left in England – or we haven't found them yet. Again, maybe targeting people with the Cummings name living in England today who have at least a 4-generation connection back to Essex or around could be a worth a bet. It is a bit of a wild card, but if related Cummings DNA patterns were found, that would be a massive discovery.

What next Y-DNA steps can we take to share what we know with the tens of thousands of Isaac descendants who might appreciate the information and want to participate in the Project and ICFA?

That's a very good question. The Isaac Project has been a little inward looking, focused on building itself – and that is not a bad thing when you are getting things going. But there is an argument for getting things down on paper and presenting them at wider forums too, not just at ICFA meetings. For example, articles in genealogical magazines? Or even a book about Isaac and the story of his descendants? There have been some brilliant discoveries in this Project, and they deserve to get wider recognition. It might also attract new members and new testers for the project.

Must we base the Project around Y-DNA testing?

Certainly not. Y-DNA can reach back to find unique markers from the 1700s Isaac grandsons and great-grandson

branches. This will make – is making – the skeleton of the tree. But using autosomal DNA will also link in all the people who don't have Y chromosomes but are Isaac descendants, and all those people, men and women, who descend from Isaac in mixed male/female descent lines. This can be organized in a way to link autosomal testers to the skeleton tree we are creating. The challenge is to find a way to integrate all the DNA testing and genealogy with each other to make a simple aid for members to use in their research.

2023 REUNION REPORT

Greetings Family and Friends! As the 2023 Reunion Chairman I was asked to look at our options for the next face-to-face meeting of the descendants of Isaac Cummings. After what will be four years since our last in-person reunion in 2019, and given the upheavals in travel and lockdowns we have all faced in the past two years, I know I am ready to get together with people as much as anyone!

You may have seen—and even voted on—the survey I sent in April asking members to weigh in on preferences for a Midwest or an East Coast location. In late June, I presented the results to the Association's Board of Directors, with the findings that by 3:1 newer members preferred an Eastern location. Interestingly, the survey found that those who have been members prior to 2018 voted 2:1 in favor of a Midwest location for the next reunion. While the results were not overwhelmingly favorable for either location, most members/families indicated that they would attend a meeting in the East. In the past, Isaac's Colonial home communities in Massachusetts have been ICFA's principal Eastern choices.

Since the organization has always returned to Massachusetts every four years where the location is a magnet for attracting new members interested in visiting places where Isaac and the early generations of Cummings families lived, **I'm pleased to report that the ICFA Executive Committee has just approved a July 20-23 in-person Reunion in the ancestral home areas north of Boston.**

We have a lot of planning and work ahead to make this event happen and I will keep you posted on our planning and agenda as we all monitor the impacts of inflation, gas prices, and concerns about future lockdowns on our ability to meet in person.

In the meantime, please save the dates and start thinking about gathering items to donate for the great fun of the legendary Reunion Banquet Auction with former president Dave Cummings as auctioneer.

Steve Hesler, 2023 Reunion Chair

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

I am pleased to report that ICFA has 115 current memberships comprised of 80 individuals, 26 families and 9 lifetime. Renewal reminders are sent out in December, January and February. If you are reading this report then you know you are in good standing since only members receive the new issues of Cummings Chronicles as a member benefit!

Yearly individual memberships can be purchased at \$20, family memberships at \$25 and Lifetime memberships at \$400. Most members use the easy access to PayPal on our website (isaaccummings-family.org) to join or renew. If preferred, they can print the short form also provided and mail it with a check to the address provided.

Please know I have stepped down from this role and longtime member and Historian Beth Rosenquist will be completing my term. It has been a pleasure being involved in an ICFA leadership position and getting to know so many of you over the years. My Mother Doris was likewise involved with the Association as Membership Chair and now my daughter Sarah is serving as a Trustee. I'll still be available to help in any way I can.

Thank you all for your encouragement, support and friendship.

Darla Jarvis, Membership Chair

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Michelle Felan-Palmer Woodway, TX
Donna Chamberlain Albion, NY
Brian Slauch Moorestown, NJ
Belinda Frazier Shoreline, WA
Deborah McGinn-Tytler Sebring, FL
Elaine Morris Traverse City, MI
Linda Bastarache Cohasset, MA
Stephen Cummings Lewistown, MT
Jami Cummings Hallam Decatur, IL
Sarah C. Morse New York, NY
George A. Woods Luray, VA
Ann Houx Warrensburg, MO
Leona DeKeyser Saint Ignace, MI
Harvey Cummings Kingwood, TX
Roy McKinney Albuquerque, NM
Keith Hamilton Framingham, MA
Tracie Cummins Fenner Wynne, AR
Deon Hammond Portland, OR
Donna Roehling Akron, NY

My Heroes & Outlaws

By Deb King

It began with a request from my uncle, Bob Shervin, to put together a brief family history of our immediate generations. Like many people, my family knowledge began and ended with the people I had known and the stories they told. As I thought about the project, commercials for ancestry.com caught my eye. Was there really any information to be found about our family? So began my headlong dive into genealogy. Seven years later I have finally dug my way through the treasure chest and traced three lines of our family from their arrival in America.

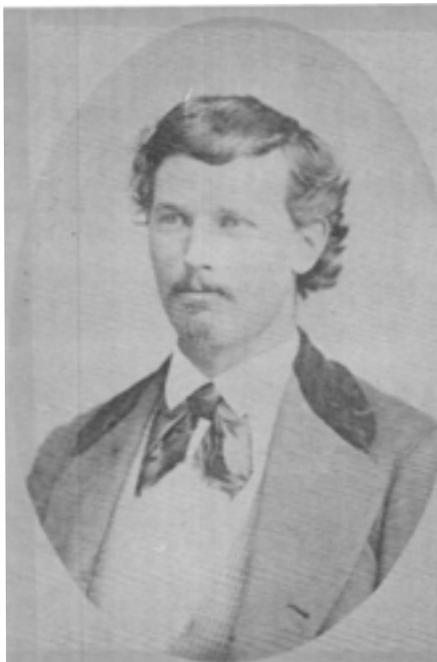
Fortunately for me, I started with the Cummings line. Barry Moravек, a long-time member and past president of the ICFA, had blazed the trail ahead of me leaving gold nuggets behind for me to gather with delight.

The first discovery was Isaac himself. It was all news to me! I was fascinated by Isaac's will, the few possessions that were considered wealth and the particular endowing of his bible.

I discovered that our line descends through Isaac's son, John, and his son Abraham and Sarah Wright Cummings Pratt, who are now at the top of my list of people in history that I would like to meet. Not only did they and their neighbors give birth to our nation, Sarah gave birth to ten children and served as midwife for countless others. The book "A History of Dunstable" (available for download on familysearch.org) describes their colonial Massachusetts world in rich detail as well as the heroics of

several Cummings family members.

I moved on to struggle through the wars of a young nation with too many early ancestors named Abraham and Stephen and quickly realized that the frequent use of the same given names over multiple generations can easily trip up a novice genealogist. Soldiers gave way to Cummings pioneers migrating to Michigan. Eli Cummings traveled by paddleboat steamer from Michigan to New York City via the Great Lakes to apprentice as an attorney. And then, Westward Ho!



Levi James Cummings, my great-great-grandfather (pictured above), was a handsome young man with a taste for fine clothes, a gift with horses, and a burning desire to go West. Levi and Laura Eleanor Clapsaddle Cummings married and took the train as far West as the tracks could take them -- to Crawford, Nebraska. I found records from the time of Levi and Laura

that match our family stories and lore about Indian raids and Buffalo soldiers. The stories vary, but some say that Levi was friendly with Calamity Jane, maybe too friendly. Our grandfather, Floyd Cummings, who held a deep fondness for his Grandma Laura, said Levi was murdered somewhere in the west and his fancy vest with a bullet hole in the back given to his good friend, the famed outlaw Butch Cassidy. Dead or otherwise, Laura eventually divorced him, married again, went back to Michigan, and in time went west once again. Quite a lady!

Mystery and murder surrounded Floyd Cummings as well. On the run by the time he was twenty, he lived his entire adult life on the lam using assumed names. In 1932 he married Margaret Hedrick and lived the remainder of his life as Robert J. Shervin in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. We have strong family evidence that the U.S. Marshalls kept him looking over his shoulder for most of his adult life, but was there some other reason for him to worry as well? We think so, but that is a good story for another time.

What was fact and what was fiction in the stories Grandfather Floyd told? Were the tales he told designed, at least in part, to be sure that we would never know the truth? Thanks to weeks of record searching, we know more than we did when my quest began, but we will probably never know the truth about it all. The 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center, where U.S. Marshall and federal prison records were kept, probably turned his secrets to ashes.

I started out to write a brief family history with the problem of not having enough information. Today's challenge is having far too much. My goal now is to draw a broad family portrait that connects our colonial and early American heroes to our pioneers and outlaws through the centuries and describe who our family is today.

Our story runs from Isaac to Levi and Floyd to our current generation, and includes Cummings descendants such as Floyd's son Robert L. (Cummings) Shervin, my Uncle Bob. Not unlike our earliest ancestors such as Abraham, Uncle Bob has built a rich life from nothing and tirelessly served his community of Jackson Hole, Wyoming, as a volunteer, a mayor, a county commissioner and a friend. The local newspaper printed an article in May of this year titled "Bob Shervin has been a Gift to Our Town". And so he is to our family as well. 🐾

SAVE THE DATE

**ICFA's Biennial Reunion
in the Boston, MA area**

July 20–23, 2023

Watch for more information in the coming months!



ICFA's growing interest in regional gatherings of Isaac Cummings' descendant families has turned up another recent event, this time in beautiful St. Anthony, Idaho. Held at the home of LaVerne Cummings (center front to the right of her granddaughter holding her baby great granddaughter), who arrived there more than a half-century ago with her logger stepfather, mother and siblings. The two-day reunion was a first-time celebration that included relatives from both sides of her family. More than half of the sixty or so attendees were Isaac descendants and most came from nearby locations and states. LaVerne's direct line 19th century Cummings ancestors first went west to Michigan, then on to South Dakota, then back east to north central Wisconsin. "I grew up on my grandfather's farm there after my father was killed in World War II," Laverne explained, "and the story was that he was unhappy that he couldn't grow potatoes in South Dakota so he went to where he could grow and eat his spuds." LaVerne says that the get-together had a lot of good food, refreshments and memories, and her best memory is just being able to share and talk about those recollections with her Cummings kin. A request to members: Please let us know of any other Isaac family events that come to your attention.

ICFA LEADERSHIP

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*Vice President, Digital Records and
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David L. Cummings

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2015-2017

Lincoln Cummings
2011-2015

Leigh E. Cummings, Jr.
2009-2011

David L. Cummings
2001-2003 and 2007-2009

Sherry Milham
2005-2007

Darla Jarvis
2003-2005

Barry C. K. Moravek
1997-2001

Using Autosomal DNA to Verify Genealogic Ancestry

By Robert V. Cooney

Incredible advances in DNA technology over the last decade have made the use of DNA a valuable tool in genealogy research. Testing for autosomal DNA often allows individuals to solve roadblocks in their family trees, verify written genealogical records and occasionally produce a surprise for the family. However, more individuals need to be educated that DNA testing alone is insufficient to release the full power of the method. Utilizing a DNA testing service with appropriate search tools and a large database along with uploading one's family tree through multiple generations are essential to deciphering your family's genetic genealogy.

The following example verifying my own and my siblings' relation to our 3rd great grandparents, James L. Cummings and Lucy French through their son Frederick Goodrich Cummings is offered as an example of both the power and limitations of genetic genealogy.

James Cummings was born in 1766 in Merrimac, Hillsborough, New Hampshire, the son of Simeon Cummings and Hannah Bowers. Lucy French was born in 1769 in Dunstable, Mass, the daughter of Benjamin French and Molly Lovewell. They married in 1787. She died in 1839 and was buried in the Village Cemetery in Passadumkeag, Maine. James Cummings married again and died in 1854 in Clayton County, Iowa, and was buried in the Old Stone School Cemetery near Volga, Iowa.

James and Lucy French Cummings had 11 children:

JAMES Jr. (1788 - 1854) m Hannah Ingalls

NANCY (1790 -) m John Dudley

Benjamin French (1792 -) m Mary M

LUCY French (abt 1796 -) m Thomas Bartlett

Olivia (1797-) m (1) Samuel Bailey, (2) M Codman

HARRIET (1798 -) m Jesse Wheeler

MARY GRACE (abt 1800 -) m Daniel Twist

Elizabeth B. (1809 - 1834)

Fannie Melvina (1811 -) m Philip Foster

Maria J. (1814 -) m John B. Moran

FREDRICK GOODRICH (1815 -) m Sophia Douglass

FREDERICK GOODRICH is the direct line Cummings ancestor of the author and his siblings. The other names in BOLD are Frederick's siblings whose descendants were tested in this study and appear in the chart on pages 12-13.

In order to provide DNA evidence that supports my descent from James Cummings and Lucy French it is necessary to identify shared DNA with descendants of other children of James and Lucy Cummings. The use of “ThruLines” in Ancestry.com provides a simple means of identifying such connections for those individuals that have linked their family trees with their DNA results in Ancestry.com. While it is possible to confirm such relationships with DNA from a single individual alone, the inclusion of siblings greatly enhances the number of relationships and improves the statistical analysis in support of the proposed relationship (for this example in addition to my own DNA I have also included DNA from my brother and sister in the analysis).

As shown in the large chart, if only my own DNA were used in this study, no relationship with James Cummings Jr.'s descendants would have been observed. Only my sister shows a relationship with three of his descendants whereas my brother and I have no DNA in common with them. This illustrates the inherent loss of shared DNA as the generational distance increases. In theory two siblings would share approximately 2,550 centimorgans (cM) of DNA that they inherit from their parents. First cousins would share about 850 cM of DNA, second cousins about 213 cM and third cousins approximately 53 cM and fourth cousins about 13 cM. While these are the theoretical amounts of shared DNA that one would predict, the reality is that, like any chance event, the actual amount can vary widely and in some cases no shared DNA is observed while in other cases an excessive amount of DNA may be shared. This is the reason that predictions of relationships by Ancestry.com for an individual are conservative and can vary widely. By utilizing one's siblings it is possible to find more relationships and better define the average amount of shared DNA, thereby increasing confidence in the nature of the relationship. Confidence intervals for close relations are usually quite good, however, as the distance between two related individuals increases, the confidence in the precise nature of the relationship decreases significantly.

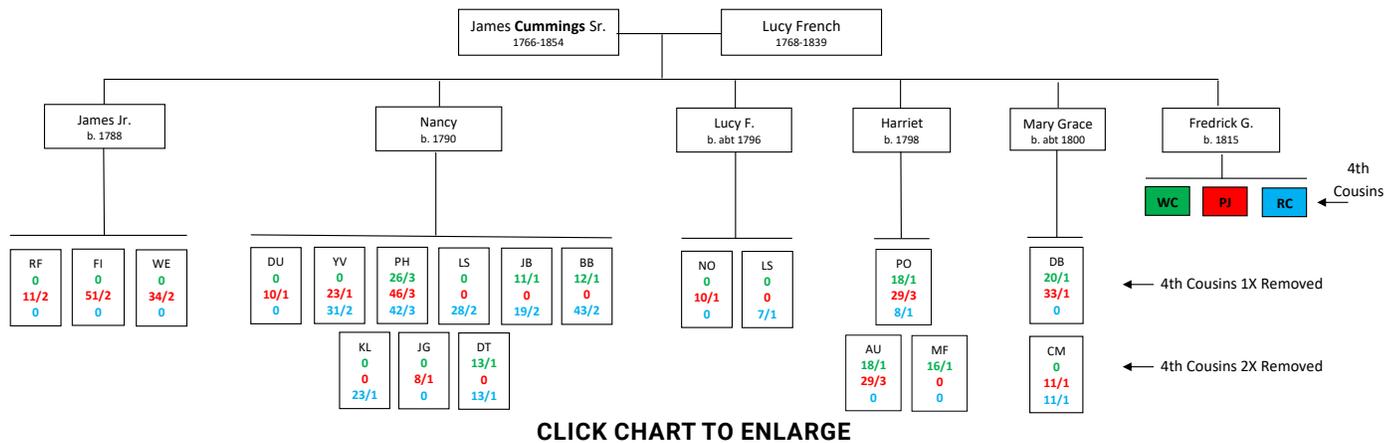
Table 1 summarizes the predicted shared cM's for the known relationships as well as the mean cMs of shared DNA observed. All of the relationships are between either fourth cousins once removed or fourth cousins twice removed. While the amount of shared DNA is somewhat higher than theoretically predicted for such relationships, this can be explained potentially by a couple of factors; one, many individuals that share no DNA with the three of us would not be identified hence many potential zeros are excluded from any calculation; two, the grandmother of Lucy French was also a Cummings through her (paternal) grandmother (which may introduce some additional DNA matching. Or the third possibility is that chance led to a greater amount of shared DNA. Previous study has yielded average values for fourth cousins once or twice removed that were 3-4 times higher than the predicted value, indicating the mean levels observed here are not abnormal.

Consequently the evidence is compelling that indeed we are descended from James and Lucy and clearly related to our Cummings cousins as predicted from written genealogical records.

Relationship	Predicted cM Shared DNA	N	Observed Mean cM (+/- 99% CI)	Median cM	Range cM
4th Cousin 1X Rem.	7	33	14.1 + 7.7	10	0-51
4th Cousin 2X Rem.	3.5	24	7.8 + 5.9	0	0-34

TABLE 1. COMPARISON OF ACTUAL SHARED DNA WITH PREDICTED VALUES FOR THE EXPECTED RELATIONSHIPS.

The data shown would not have been possible without the help of many individuals uploading their trees in addition to having their DNA analyzed. As more individuals fully participate in the new field of genetic genealogy, we can all share in the excitement of discovery of our heritage. A final important point to note is that the DNA shared in the matches described may derive from either James Cummings through his parents or Lucy French through her Cummings ancestors. Consequently, one cannot distinguish whether a particular shared DNA match is derived from the Cummings side or the French side. Because of the paternal inheritance of surnames we sometime have an inherent bias that ignores the equal contribution of DNA from the maternal side that marries into the Cummings line! Hopefully, in the future we will be able to identify individual sequences of DNA that can be attributed to a particular ancestor and then search and compare those sequences with our shared DNA matches and better define the precise genetic relationship we share.



The above chart shows the DNA connections between Robert Cooney and two of his siblings with descendants of five other children of James Cummings and Lucy French. DNA cM values/# of segments are reported for all DNA shared individuals with the colors corresponding to the individual with whom they are shared. Note that unweighted shared DNA cM values provided by Ancestry.com are used as the adjusted weighted values may be misleading. Surnames are listed in the figure boxes only when they are different from the female parent.

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Note: This article by member Robert V. Cooney's is part of ICFA's recently-announced Autosomal DNA Project headed by Vice President Susan Thompson. The initiative is a companion to the Association's successful Y-DNA Project that was launched in 2015. For more information please contact Susan at skthompson71@comcast.net.

SAVE THE DATE

ICFA Online Genealogical Symposium
and Annual Meeting

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2022

Watch for more information in the coming weeks!

New Book about Candy Cummings

Attention baseball fans: Our friend and member Stephen Katz has just published a new book about William Arthur "Candy" Cummings, the Isaac descendant from Ware, Massachusetts, and Hall of Famer who forever changed the game with his pitch called the curveball. Titled *Candy Cummings: The Life and Career of the Inventor of the Curveball*, the book follows Candy from his days as an amateur to his years in the first professional leagues and critically examines the evidence and competing claims to prove that he was indeed the originator of the pitch. The publication is available at Amazon and other booksellers.

**A NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL ORGANIZATION FOR DESCENDANTS AND RESEARCHERS OF
THE EARLY AMERICAN COLONIST ISAAC CUMMINGS (1601–1677)**

ABOUT ICFA

Isaac Cummings arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony with his wife and family from Essex, England, about 1635. He died in Topsfield, Massachusetts, in 1677. His American descendants today number in the hundreds of thousands. The Isaac Cummings Family Association (ICFA) was organized in the mid-1990's by a small group of these descendants who were serious family historians independently exploring their Cummings family ancestry. Their objective was to organize and share their efforts to discover, collect, and preserve information about the history and genealogy of Isaac's American families and honor them as nation-building pioneers. For the past quarter century, ICFA has helped Isaac's descendants and researchers find and understand their shared Cummings heritage and family connections. ICFA holds national reunions, publishes a newsletter, operates a DNA testing project, maintains an online genealogical database and archive, and supports traditional and genetic research into the history of Isaac and his English ancestors.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to descendants of Isaac Cummings and anyone who is interested in Isaac's descendant families and the ICFA. Annual memberships are \$20 for an individual and \$25 for a family including spouse and children under 18. Membership runs for a full calendar year beginning January 1 and entitles members to access the private ICFA Genealogy Database, receive the *Cummings Chronicles* newsletter, Reunion information and other communications during the membership period. Lifetime Memberships are also available at a cost of \$400, twenty times the current individual rate of \$20. A Lifetime Membership includes spouse and children under 18 for the duration of the purchasing member's life. Membership funds are used to defray the Association's operating costs. Members who do not pay dues by January 1 become delinquent and are placed on the inactive list.

If you have a child, grandchild or relative with an interest in family history, give them the gift of an ICFA membership and get them involved as an active member of the ICFA family.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL

NOTE: This application is also available online at ICFA's Web site (isaaccummingsfamily.org) where dues payment can be made using your PayPal account.

Check one: New Member Renewal

Type of Membership: Individual \$20.00 Family \$25.00 Lifetime \$400.00

Name (s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

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Please make your check or money order payable to Isaac Cummings Family Association and send both form and check to:

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ICFA is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization and my contribution may help defray expenses involved in operating ICFA. I understand that membership is from January 1st to December 31st of each calendar year. I acknowledge that ICFA may have access to my contact information. Furthermore, I trust the honest intent of the Association's volunteer board members and other leaders and hold them harmless of any actions and obligations.