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3 REVISITING HAPLOGROUPS

Who will police the policemen?

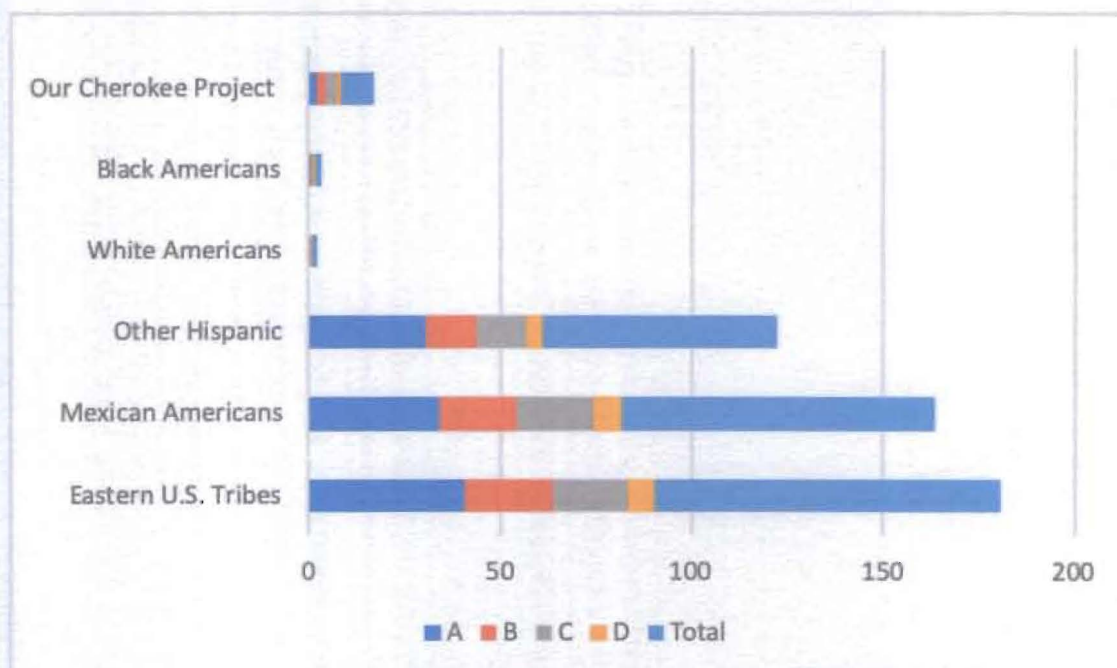
—Juvenal, Roman Poet

When I moved to the North and began my adult professional life I used to tell new acquaintances I was part Indian. The invariable response was frequently, “Funny, you don’t look like an Indian.” “What do Indians look like?” I would ask. In the same spirit, we are going to see in this chapter what Indian mitochondrial DNA looks like.



Dorene Soiret, who lives in Southern California, joined DNA Consultants' Cherokee Studies Project Phase III in early 2018. Her haplogroup is H1z1. She traces this line to the sisters Emily and Paulina/Perlina Adkins, daughters of Eliza Jane Murray Adkins (1829-1908). See Appendix B, III. On right: Great-Grandmother Alice Calle Bland as a young woman in Oklahoma.

Thanks to books like this one, and a profound transformation in the field of genetics, American Indian types are becoming recognized as very varied and extremely diverse. It's an exciting time for descendants to be alive and find the truth, especially about Cherokees and other Southern Indians.



Classic Native American Haplogroups across U.S. Populations, including Native Tribes.

Before turning to newly recognized Native American haplogroups, however, let us have a look at the distribution of haplogroups in our project versus in federally recognized Indian tribes. The graph shows how “official” Native American haplogroups are distributed in the U.S. The range goes from a high in Eastern Tribes like the Mohawk and Cherokee, where they represent more than 90% of all haplogroups reported, to Americans at large self-identifying as white, or Caucasian, where they account for only about 1% of haplogroups. These statistics leave out haplogroup X. But if we equate haplotype with heritage—in other words, as a sufficient reason to consider that individual has Native American ancestry and might “be” Native American, we can infer the following:

- Eastern North American Indians in tribes recognized by the U.S. or Canadian governments all belong in their maternal lineage to A, B, C, D or sometimes X and no other haplogroup (like H, J, L etc.).

- Only Indians in federally recognized tribes are included in these genetic surveys.
- Any haplogroup not found to be A, B, C, D and sometimes X is rejected by those drawing up the sample (e.g, H, J, L, etc.).
- Only Indians in geographical locations where federally recognized tribes live are studied.
- Mexican Americans have approximately the same percentages of these haplogroups and total Indian ancestry as Indians who live in federally recognized tribal locations.
- Other Hispanic people (Puerto Ricans, Nicaraguans etc.) have slightly less American Indian “admixture,” though it is still the majority ancestry and is divided into the same haplogroup proportions.
- Whites composing the general population have almost no American Indian ancestry by this measure.
- Blacks have up to twice as much as whites, though it is still minimal.
- In the Cherokee project of DNA Consultants (n=175), only 8.6% of the volunteers proved to have classic A-D Native American haplogroups (13.7% if we include those who had X).

In Phase III of our Cherokee DNA Project, 56 participants tested their mitochondrial haplotype and submitted a genealogy showing what they believed to be direct female Cherokee descent. This phase lasted from May of 2008 to June of 2018. It followed the same protocol as the previous two phases, the results for which were published 2014 in *Cherokee DNA Studies: Real People Who Proved the Geneticists Wrong*, by Donald and Teresa Yates.

The present volume adds participant results from autosomal testing. Here we compare our so-called anomalous Cherokees to white Americans at large and two similar populations in Tennessee and North Carolina alongside a classic survey in American Indian genetic studies by Bolnick and Smith (2003).⁷⁶ Our Cherokee results are also compared to select haplogroup frequencies in Europe, Egypt, the Middle East and East Mediterranean.

⁷⁶ D. A. Bolnick and D. G. Smith, “Unexpected Patterns of Mitochondrial DNA Variation among Native Americans from the Southeastern United States,” *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 122/4 (2003), pp. 336-54.

Cherokee Project Phase III Results Summarized

Hg	Phase III n=56	Phase III %	All Phases n=175 %
A			2.3
B	2	3.6	2.3
C	3	5.4	2.9
D			1.1
H	14	25.0	16.6
I			1.1
J	6	10.7	9.7
K	5	8.9	6.3
L	1	1.8	5.7
N			0.6
R	3	5.4	1.7
T	4	7.1	17.7
U	15	26.8	21.7
V	1	1.8	1.1
W	1	1.8	1.7
X	1	1.8	5.1
UNKNOWN OR OTHER			2.3
TOTAL	56	100.0	100.0

When Is a Match a Match?

Do haplogroups correspond to different world regions? To ancient origins and migrations? Are they continent specific? Is your mitochondrial haplogroup a good indication by itself of your ethnicity? These are all questions that must be asked in genetic genealogy. On one hand, L haplotypes are routinely categorized as Sub-Saharan African, Tj and K are universally viewed as originating in the Middle East even though they later spread to Europe, where they have relatively low frequencies, and H is usually considered as limited to European ancestry, since it attains a preponderance of more than 50% in European and American genealogies. Even A, B, C and D are not confined to Native Americans or their supposed Asiatic founder populations. On the other hand, X can point to Native American *or* Eurasian origins. In analyzing haplogroups and ethnicity, the authors of a recent study

observe:⁷⁷

Mitochondrial haplogroup classification was highly concordant with self-identified race/ethnicity (SIRE) in non-Hispanic whites (94.8%), but was considerably lower in admixed populations including non-Hispanic blacks (88.3%), Mexican Americans (81.8%), and other Hispanics (61.6%), suggesting SIRE does not accurately reflect maternal genetic ancestry, particularly in populations with greater proportions of admixture.

The direct maternal lineage is, after all, only one line among many. Quite possibly it's not reflective of other haplogroups in the family tree. Still, it seems to have a very important value, and uniparental DNA testing has fewer issues of validity and reliability than autosomal. In cases of H, L and Native American types, at least, the mother's mitochondrial type is strongly correlated with physiognomy, physical traits and societal classification. Other haplotypes like T and J remain utterly invisible until revealed by laboratory methods.

On the other hand, we must not discount anomalies: people who, in the words of John Trudell, "don't answer to their descriptions." They may be part of multi-generational, repetitive patterns. Such an effect of persistent admixture is highlighted by Mitchell et al's figures for Mexican Americans, who exhibit only 5.3% H (as opposed to 43.0% H in Non-Hispanic White Americans, while 81.8% of Mexican Americans carry classic A-B-C-D haplogroups, which only 1.1% of whites have.

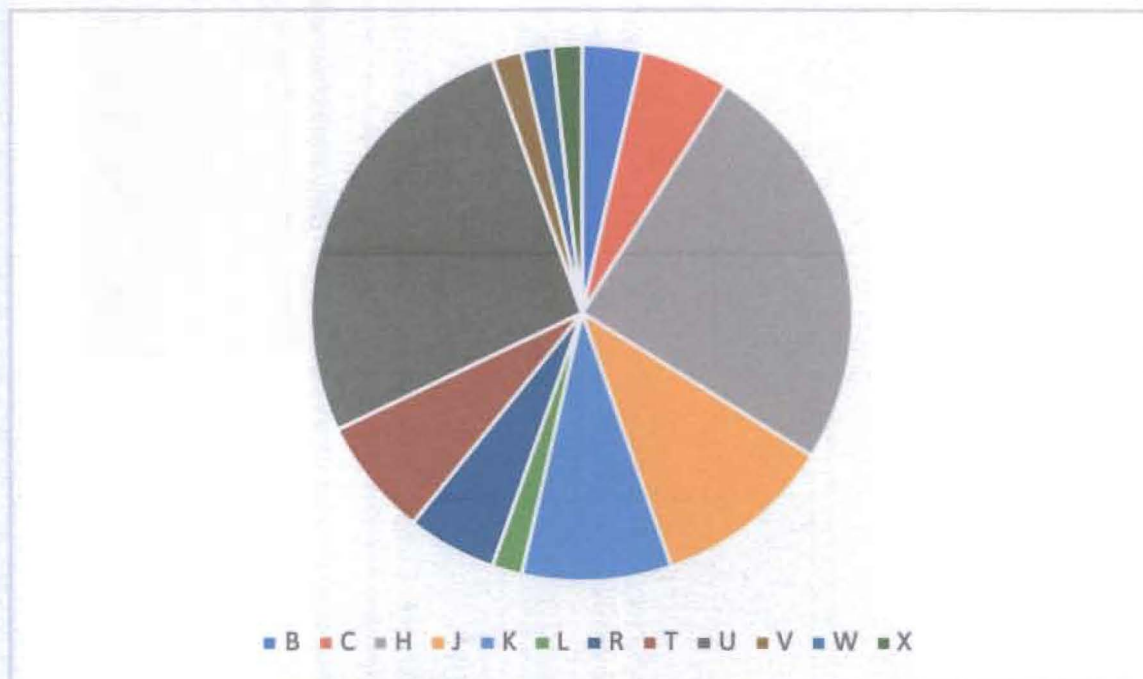
Another sign of the close ties between haplogroup and identity occurs in African ancestry. In the Mitchell study, 98.3% of Non-Hispanic Blacks have an L haplogroup. Only 1% of Non-Hispanic Whites do. Such an extreme shows how a mitochondrial haplogroup can define one to oneself and at the same time to society. Even if you are not a genetic determinist, haplogroups matter. Covertly or not, they influence how you think of yourself and how society regards you. In terms of DNA testing, if you have a "non-Native" haplogroup but identify with your Native ancestry you are liable to be conflicted.

The biggest problem with haplogroups is labeling. Since the 1990s a rigid definition of five Native American types has prevailed—A, B, C, D and sometimes X. If any other haplogroup is detected it must come from admixture—that's the thinking anyway. That individual does not have a Native American lineage and cannot claim to "be" Native American from his

⁷⁷ Sabrina L. Mitchell et al, "Characterization of Mitochondrial Haplogroups in a Large Population-Based Sample from the United States," *Human Genetics* 133/7 (2014), pp. 861-68.

or her mitochondrial heritage. In no way, shape or form.

In 2010, the genome of Mal'ta Boy, a 24,000-year-old skeleton from Siberia, was sequenced. His position in the human family tree was determined to be a link between ancient Northern Eurasians and present-day Native Americans. But Mal'ta Boy's mitochondrial DNA haplogroup, U2, would not be considered Native American today if it were found in, say, a Cherokee or Ojibway. (Full disclosure: Both authors have Cherokee ancestry and haplogroup U.) Schurr set a precedent when he rejected H and T in the Ojibway, H and J in the Cherokee and H types in the Maya as European admixture.⁷⁸ All commercial DNA testing companies but DNA Consultants still toe the line.



Haplogroup Results Phase III.

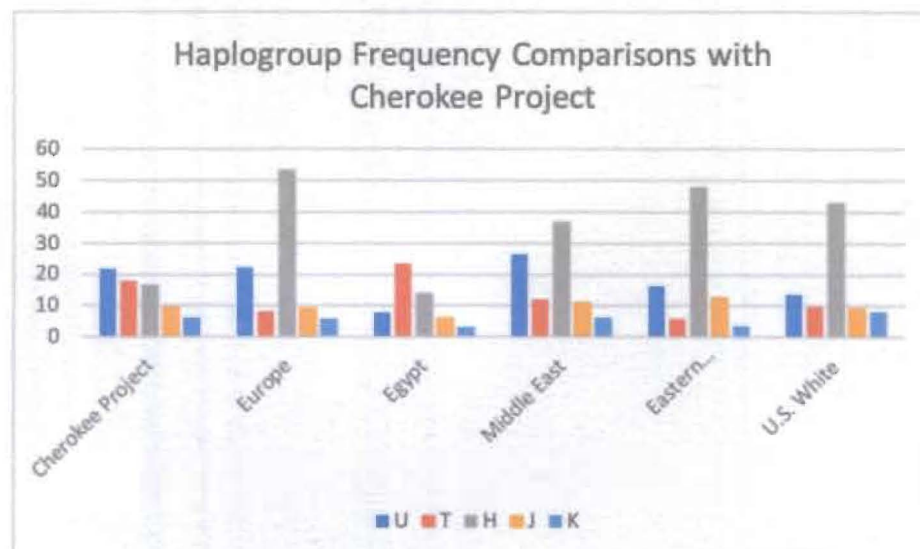
The first thing we notice about the haplogroup division from the Cherokee project is the varied distribution and high number of lineages represented. Even such rare haplogroups as W, V and R occur. All world haplogroups but East Asian and Australoid types like M are represented. Compared with reports from other Eastern tribes, Cherokee DNA is extremely diverse and highly complex. The additional "other" ingredients do not mirror the surrounding white population in their proportions. For instance, H is not the first or dominant haplogroup as it is in the U.S. white population. It occupies only the third rank (16.6%), after U (21.7) and T (17.7).

⁷⁸ Theodore G. Schurr, "Mitochondrial DNA and the Peopling of the New World," *American Scientist* 88 (2000), pp. 246-53.

***Cherokee DNA Studies Phase I-III Haplotype Distribution
with Comparisons***

Hg	Ph. III n=56	Ph. III %	All Ph. n=175 %	Mitch- ell et al U.S. White n=2,631	Mitch- ell et al Hispan- ic n=944	CBC 2001- 2011 n=135	Robe- son Co. NC Lum- bee n=937	Bol- nick & Smith 2003 n=364
A			2.3	0.8	30.6		1.4	45.3
B	2	3.6	2.3	0.4	13.4		0.4	22.0
C	3	5.4	2.9	0.3	12.8	2.2	0.5	20.6
D			1.1	0.1	4.3		0.3	12.1
H	14	25.0	16.6	43.0	6.7	40.0	36.9	
I			1.1	2.3		0.7	3.2	
J	6	10.7	9.7	9.2	2.3	12.6	8.0	
K	5	8.9	6.3	8.4	1.4	8.1	5.2	
L	1	1.8	5.7	1.0	19.4	5.2	14.6	
N			0.6				0.3	
R	3	5.4	1.7				0.3	
T	4	7.1	17.7	9.6	2.3	16.3	10.7	
U	15	26.8	21.7	13.6	3.8	12.6	12.1	
V	1	1.8	1.1	2.6			2.9	
W	1	1.8	1.7	1.9		1.5	1.1	
X	1	1.8	5.1	1.7	0.5	0.7	1.4	0.0
UNK. OR OTHER			2.3	6.1	2.5		0.6	
TOT.	56	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**123 Mohawk, 56 Cherokee, 8 Chickasaw, 130 Creek, 40 Seminole*



Population	n	A	B	C	D	X
Micmac	6	0.333	0.000	0.167	0.000	0.500
Manitoulin Island	33	0.325	0.097	0.269	0.040	0.269
Ojibwa						
North Ontario	26	0.643	0.036	0.071	0.000	0.250
Ojibwa						
Turtle Mountain	28	0.571	0.179	0.000	0.071	0.071
Chippewa						
Wisconsin Chippewa	62	0.275	0.048	0.355	0.032	0.290
Cheyenne/Arapaho	35	0.343	0.114	0.343	0.143	0.057
Sisseton/Wapeton	45	0.556	0.200	0.178	0.044	0.022
Sioux						
Pawnee	5	0.400	0.600	0.000	0.000	0.000
Mohawk	123	0.577	0.171	0.236	0.016	0.000
Oklahoma Red Cross	19	0.211	0.211	0.525	0.053	0.000
Cherokee						
Stillwell Cherokee	37	0.108	0.459	0.433	0.000	0.000
Chickasaw	8	0.125	0.750	0.125	0.000	0.000
Choctaw	27	0.741	0.185	0.037	0.037	0.000
Creek	39	0.359	0.154	0.205	0.282	0.000
Muskoke (Creek)	71	0.366	0.155	0.099	0.380	0.000
Seminole	40	0.625	0.250	0.075	0.050	0.000
Total and Average	604	41.0	22.6	19.5	7.2	9.1
Percentage of Whole						

Classic Native American Haplogroup Distribution in Eastern Tribes. Source: Bolnick and Smith 2003.

At the conclusion of the second phase, we wrote:

As in Phase I, a Middle Eastern type, haplogroup T, emerged as the most common lineage (19.4% in Phase II, 22.7% overall in the project), followed by H, U and J, all Eurasian types. Sub-Saharan African haplogroup L (9%) was prominent as a minor category. Old Europe haplogroups I, N, V and W occurred in small amounts and should be considered strikingly new, unreported signals of authentic Cherokee ancestry.⁷⁹

Phase III data augmented but did not much change the picture of Cherokee diversity. The cumulative evidence now portrays the Cherokee

⁷⁹ Yates and Yates (2014), p. 58.

people—and their descendants—as an unusual, very different, ancient population originating from outside the Southeast pre-Columbian region. Whether the exotic strains of Cherokee genetics are due to recent, colonial, ancient or primordial “admixture” has to be decided on a case-by-case basis. The Cherokee, next to perhaps Puerto Ricans, are the most mixed people on earth.⁸⁰ The Cherokee anomaly was predicted as early as the study “Unexpected Patterns of Mitochondrial DNA Variation Among Native Americans From the Southeastern United States.” In that paper, Deborah Bolnick and David Smith of the University of California at Davis, wrote:

None of the Muskogean-speaking populations, however, appear particularly closely related to the Cherokee, a southeastern Iroquoian-speaking population. One branch in the haplogroup B network contains one Cherokee and one Chickasaw, but as mentioned before, that branch may be the result of independent parallel mutations and not common ancestry. The other Cherokee haplotypes are all relatively distant from the other southeastern haplotypes. PCA results and *F_{ST}* comparisons also differentiate the Cherokee from the other southeastern populations. These results may suggest that the Cherokee did not originate in the Southeast, which would be consistent with archaeological evidence supporting a recent migration of the Cherokee into the Southeast from the Great Lakes region (MacNeish, 1952; Ritchie, 1965; Wright, 1984) or Cherokee oral traditions that suggest they came from the Ohio Valley (Mooney, 1900). Genetic data from prehistoric Great Lakes and Ohio Valley populations, which are currently being analyzed (Shook, unpublished data; Bolnick, unpublished data), are needed to help resolve this question.⁸¹

The deep-seated multiethnic character of the Cherokee is clear from the haplogroup distribution in our study. If the diversity of European haplogroups were due only to recent admixture (as Schurr, Bolnick, Smith, Malhi and others would have it), one would not expect such a result. The frequency of H would hover around 50%, as it does in Europe. Middle Eastern and Old Europe types like T, J, K, X and U would not be so prominent. The picture is similar for the Central Band of Cherokees in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee and Lumbee Indians of North Carolina.

⁸⁰ See M. Vilar et al “Genetic Diversity in Puerto Rico and Its Implications for the Peopling of the Island and the West Indies,” *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 155 (2014) 10.1002/ajpa.22569.

⁸¹ Bolnick and Smith, p. 252.

Hunting Haplotypes

While the branches on the human tree can point to broad ethnic connections, the twigs (haplotypes) are the most important evidence we must look at in combining genetics with genealogy. Appendix C displays the individual mitochondrial haplotypes in our study, as defined by mutations in the control regions HVSI and HVSII, with unusual mutations indicated in red. Note that the J2b1 haplotypes for 3.8 and one other participant exactly match. This is because they are sisters, Ava Fink and Julie Burton, who live respectively in Nebraska and South Dakota. If there is an exact congruence of nucleotide variants across the board like this, the two parties are either very close relatives like Fink and Burton or female-linked relatives descending from the same female as much as two to ten thousand years ago.

We are not interested in “fuzzy matches,” close but not exact matches that may be good for sales and social media engagement but do not really cut it. Most companies and studies use “consensus” definitions for haplotypes, that is approximate rather than exact and complete matches by mutation. Do you want to be descended from a real, concrete ancestor or a theoretical and composite one? The difference was pointed out by Martin Richards and other leading lights in the field, but no one really knows how well the various companies followed that advice.⁸² Likewise, there is today no really clear, unified notation system.

The C haplotypes in participants 2.66, 3.40, 3.62 are not perfect matches, but one or two mutations “off.” At some point downstream from a common female ancestor who probably lived thousands of years ago, to judge by the mitochondrial clock, they added or lost a mutation or two compared to the original configuration (which can only be guessed at). They all seem to belong to a common C cluster at any rate. Is it Cherokee? Where did it come from before it was Cherokee?

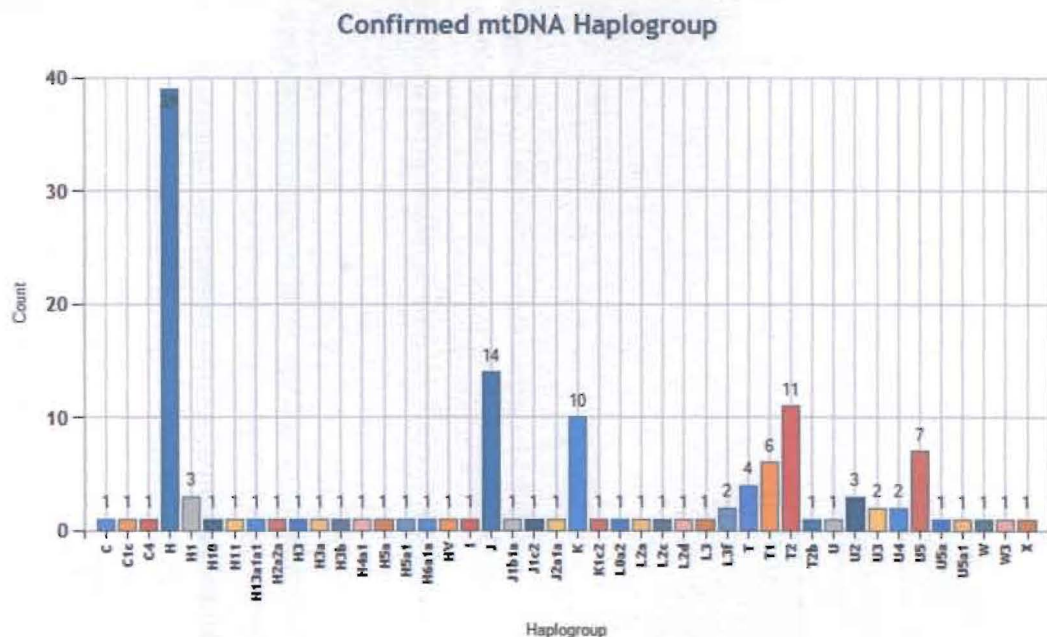
Haplogroup C is relatively uncommon in Southwest Indians, where the individual known as 2.66 tested. Southwestern tribes’ ancestral DNA shows C in 15% of all cases on record (Carlyle 2000). In Mexican Americans it was the haplogroup for 20% of all persons, a bit higher (Mitchell). In one Northern Mexico study, it accounted for 23% modern-day Indians (Green 2000). It is more prevalent in Eastern tribes, reaching a frequency of 53% in one study of Oklahoma Cherokee (Mahli 2001). It is most common in Algonquian, Siouan and Iroquoian populations. Oddly, it attains its highest frequency in Patagonian Indians of South America (hence Mapuche matches), showing it is one of the oldest and most widespread lineages in the Western Hemisphere.

⁸² H. Bandelt et al., “The Case for the Continuing Use of the Revised Cambridge Reference Sequence (rCRS) and the Standardization of Notation in Human Mitochondrial DNA Studies,” *Journal of Human Genetics* 59 (2014), pp. 66–77.

Secretary Echo Hawk and The Cherokee Nation v. Chief Sitting Owl

A Cherokee DNA project at Family Tree DNA was started in 2001 by Chief Joe (Sitting Owl) White. He kicked the project off with his own mitochondrial sample, which allegedly went back to a Cherokee ancestress named Juanita born in 1850 in Alabama. White's matriline proved to be J1b. The study soon had 202 members, about half the total membership of the tribe. In 2003, I heard about it from Family Tree DNA. Officials there were joking that its leader should be renamed Rolling Bagel because so many of his members were matching Jews. However, a bigger insult followed this.

In August 2010, Larry Echo Hawk, assistant secretary of Indian Affairs (conceivably responding to pressure by the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma) ruled that the Central Band of Cherokees simply were not, as they claimed, descendants of the Cherokee occupants of the 1806 Congressional Reservation who had declined to be removed at the time of the Trail of Tears in the 1830s but remained in Tennessee. The state immediately withdrew recognition of the tribe. A caretaker chief (some say "plant") replaced White. The next year in July, Family Tree DNA abruptly terminated the Central Band DNA Project by revoking log-in privileges to administrators and members and removing project information from its website. Most victims of this arbitrary decision didn't realize what had happened.



Snapshot of Central Band haplogroup distribution shortly before shutdown showing outsized H and "Jewish" haplogroups J, K and T.

The motivations behind these actions became clearer on March 23, 2012, when Echo Hawk issued his final ruling. Richard Allen, Cherokee Nation Strategy and Policy analyst, said the CBC is one of five groups in Tennessee

claiming to be a Cherokee tribe that the Cherokee Nation “vigorously opposed.”⁸³ The assault on the honesty and good intentions of hundreds of Tennesseans was publicized in the *Cherokee Phoenix*, the national newspaper, which gloated over an important victory. “One reason the Cherokee Nation opposes such groups is that such groups appropriate and distort our culture and our history. For example, this group identifying as the Central Band of Cherokee claim that they are the descendants of ancient Israelites, which is by far one of the wildest claims made by any of these groups,” Allen stated, going so far as to risk being accused of anti-Semitism. “The Cherokee Nation has identified more than 200 such groups who claim to be new Cherokee bands, clans, tribes and nations. These groups cannot meet the requirements set forth by the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs Branch of Acknowledgement and Research.”

Chief White, who was born January 4, 1948, died in Tennessee on Feb. 7, 2014. His wife, Pamela Sexton, survived him. There was no public funeral or obituary, because his widow said that would attract unfavorable publicity and possibly be a danger to the family.

After the Central Band DNA Project was deleted by Family Tree DNA, a new Cherokee DNA Project administered by Janine Cloud and Roberta Estes appeared in its place. Only customers with A, B, C, D or sometimes X were admitted into this project. The last we checked, there were results for only six participants listed as Native American Mitochondrial; their haplogroups were A (1), C (4) and D (1). The rest of the 97 members had their haplotypes reported as “Non-Native Haplogroup.”

Roberta Estes’ genetic genealogy site DNAeXplained site was founded with Family Tree DNA as its godfather in 2005. Estes is quite “eXplicit” about who gets to be considered an Indian and who does not. She routinely lectures visitors who do not have the right haplogroup or for one reason or another deserve no title to American Indian ancestry. In a long post titled, “Proving Native American Ancestry Using DNA” (Dec. 18, 2012), her “myth busting” covers free college, joining a tribe and the good-ole Cherokee grandmother legend.

Geneticists v. Everybody Else

The message is clear. Unless you have haplogroup A, B, C, D and sometimes X, forget it!⁸⁴ This stance must gladden the hearts of lobbyists who work on the Beltway and former Indian Country capitals like Nashville

⁸³ Will Chavez, “Echo Hawk Rules on Central Band,” *Cherokee Phoenix*, March 28, 2012: <https://www.cherokeephoenix.org/Article/index/6113>.

⁸⁴ See “Native American Mitochondrial Haplogroups,” a post from Sept. 18, 2013 that has the status of perennial: <https://dna-explained.com/2013/09/18/native-american-mitochondrial-haplogroups/>.

and Atlanta. According to one source, a single Task Force of the Cherokee Nation government recently spent \$900,000 a year to fight disenfranchised Bureau of Indian Affairs Category 4 Cherokees (like the Central Band in Tennessee) seeking federal acknowledgment. This figure does not include the Cherokee Nation's campaign against the Lumbees, which has heated up in the past few years as the North Carolina group seemed to get closer to success.⁸⁵ Estes, Family Tree DNA and others are in lock-step with this politicization of genetics.

The guidebooks for putting “wannabe” Indians like the Central Band in their place are Philip J. Deloria's *Playing Indian* and Circe Sturm's *Becoming Indian*. Leading geneticists who tirelessly work for restrictive notions of Indian DNA are Deborah Bolnick, Kim Tall Bear and Jennifer Raff. The irony is that DNA cannot be used to gain recognition in any federal Indian tribe anyway. Most people testing their ancestry are only interested in the results for personal knowledge. They want to connect with a real ancestor, one who gave descendants certain values and cultural and physical traits.

We don't hold any particular brief for the Central Band, nor do we entertain a belief in Lost Tribes to any great extent, but we have to point out that in order to say that the claim of Jewish ancestry among the Cherokee is a “wild” lie the Cherokee Nation must have a “true” version of Cherokee history without any Jews in it to compare it to. Yet they do not even have a fixed storyline. The first recorded Cherokee principal chief, Moytoy, was, as we show in a later chapter, a Sephardic Jew in Charleston by the name of Beamor, while Chief Red Bird (Aaron Brock), another eighteenth-century Cherokee figure, carried the Cohen Modal Haplotype of Old Testament Priests (*J1 2/2.1+*) and was presumably Jewish, too, though many of his descendants got their quantum of American Indian not from a Cherokee but a Creek Indian. Those are not wild claims at all but sober facts.

Haplogroup W

Another renegade haplogroup that turns up in both the DNA Consultants and Central Band project was W. Participant 28 in Phase III, Peter Lyle Atkins of Reidsville, North Carolina, had mutations that perfectly matched the Central Band record labeled N89700 (no longer available). Atkins' matrilineal mutations in 2015 were only one off from those of Linda Sponenburg (2.31, S5113), who tested in 2012, and was included in the first volume of results. “I have done extensive research on my parent's families,”

⁸⁵ The Center for Responsive Politics reports large amounts spent in over six different categories of Federal and State influence peddling and political contributions, including gaming industry lobbying: <https://www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/clients/summary>.

said Sponenburg at the time. “Both of my parent’s lines came to America in the mid seventeenth century.”

“When I was twelve,” she said, “my grandfather’s sister told me that we were Cherokee Indian. They were farmers in southeastern Tennessee. As an adult I became a genealogist researching my grandfather’s family. I could not find the family on the Cherokee rolls. I knew we had to be part of the Cherokee nation because of the traditions that my mother had taught us. These traditions were identical to those of the Cherokee. I knew ... the proof might not be on the paper rolls but would be in my genetic code.”

In 2012, Sponenburg thought that the Native American, which showed on an autosomal basis well enough, was “probably not through my mother’s mitochondrial line.” Haplogroup W, after all was not considered a Native American haplogroup. But when her lineage matched Phase III participant Peter Lyle Atkins almost perfectly, and Atkins’ W was exactly matched, mutation for mutation, with a Central Band of the Cherokee W, it seemed time to revise the one’s thinking on whether W might not be, with T, J and H, an ancient contributor to the Cherokee population.

In Mitosearch (online until mid-2018), there were 17 exact matches on both sectors, as we noted in Atkins’ report.

User ID	Hg	Origin
25PW6	W	London
2KUMC	W	Canada
3UNTS	Unknown	Canada
4D393	W	Ireland
5KVM5	W	New York
6S2HD	Unknown	Rebecca Lashley, 1790
6CTQN	I1	Naples
7557B	W	Carrie Ryder
7SQTZ	W	Sarah Albee, Mass.
a2ddy	W	Sweden
FJ288	Unknown	Catherine McDonald, Ireland
K3MX9	W	England
PZKT3	W	Mary Gaskill, N.Y.
SHZFK	W	Sarah Catherine Moore
SWVG6	W	London

T9CJS	W	Bulgaria
TEG9Y	W	Emily Williams, London

All were genetic if not genealogical cousins. Most went back to northern Europe, though there were some traced no farther than to North America.

What about Peter Lyle Atkins' W mitochondrial line? It traces back to Cherokee territory, where his earliest known female ancestor, Nancy Buckley, was born in 1824. Her mother is unknown. The exact matches from Mitosearch demonstrate it is a widely dispersed and common type, with high frequency in England and the British Isles. Its specific mutations have origins in West Asia and North Africa with other Jewish haplotypes. The family always regarded the line as Cherokee. Atkins claims to be Native American, though more Shawnee, from his direct male line, shown below. A lifelong resident of the Reidsville area on the North Carolina border with Southside Virginia, he says, "This is where the Melungeons got together with certain Indian tribes before moving west."

Atkins is so skilled at flint napping, bow making and other Indian arts that in January 2020 he conducted a workshop at the Museum of Natural History in Martinsville as the institution's official "live exhibit" demoing primitive skills and craft making.



William V. Adkins III.

Male Line Descent of Peter Lyle Atkins (I2a)

William Vortimer Adkins I b: 1690 in Henrico Co., Va., d: 1754 in Va.

William Vortimer Adkins II 1721-1784

William Vortimer Adkins III b: Sep 21, 1760, d: 1848

Henry Caleb Adkins b: 1782, d: 1864

Ralph Adkins b: 1807, d: 1886

Benjamin Edwin Bartlett Adkins b: 1837, d: 1870

Beverly Lee Atkins b: 1867, d: 1934

Rex James Atkins b: 1889, d: 1958

James Avalon Atkins b: 1923, d: 1977

Peter Lyle Atkins b: 1958



Nancy Buckley.

Female Line Ancestry of Peter Lyle Atkins (W)

Nancy Buckley b: Dec. 19, 1824, N.C., d: Mar 30, 1911

Mary Elizabeth McCraw b: 1847, d: 1918

Lucy Maude Towe b: 1879, d: 1916

Mary Nina M. Weddle b: 1903, d: 1980

Ruby Grey Nelson b: 1931, d: 1998

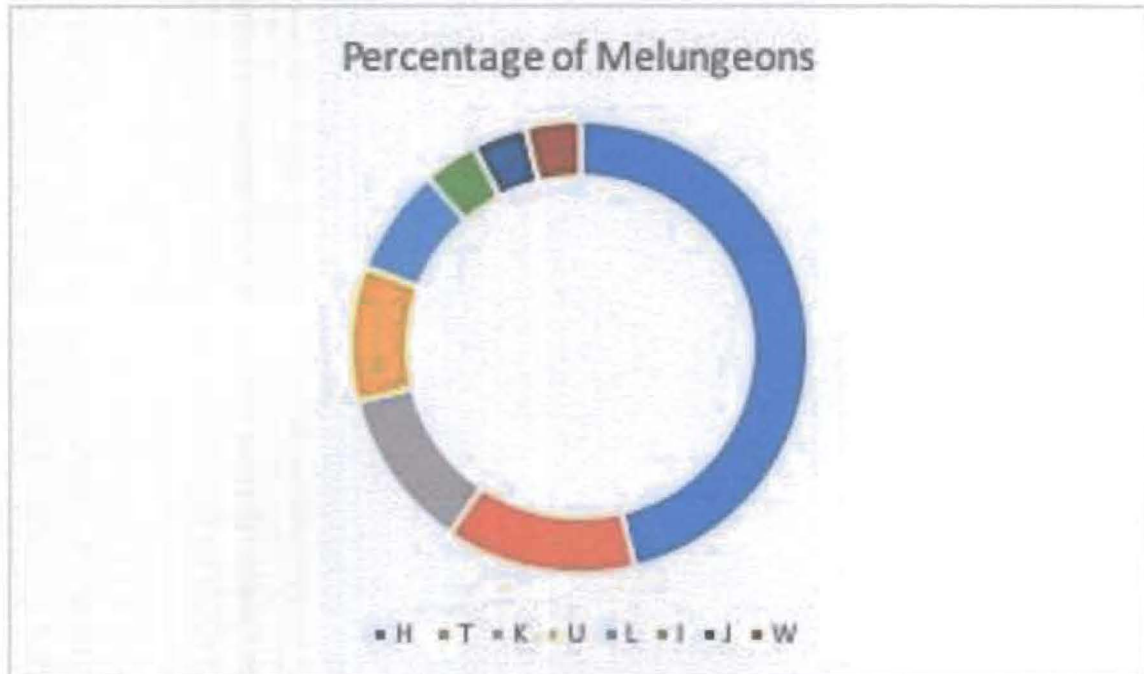
Peter Lyle Atkins b: 1958

Before ending this survey we should briefly mention the Melungeon-mtDNA project at Family Tree DNA and its haplogroup distribution. The study of Melungeon DNA was inspired by N. Brent Kennedy's book⁸⁶ and took a great advance forward in 2001 with Elizabeth Hirschman's Melungeon DNA Project, which looked at both Y chromosome and mitochondrial results. Unfortunately, Family Tree DNA killed the entire project after taking thousands of dollars from Hirschman, its generous sponsor, as well as from paying participants. From one moment to the next, company officials took all its data offline, without warning, in 2008. Reportedly, Bennett Greenspan and his advisors were seeing "too much" Jewish! They did not like the way the data was being used in Hirschman and others' publications. The original data are not available anymore, an outcome just like the Central Band of Cherokees project.

The project that popped up in the place of Hirschman's Melungeon DNA

⁸⁶ N. Brent Kennedy with Robyn Vaughan Kennedy, *The Melungeons: The Resurrection of a Proud People*, 2nd sub-edition (Macon: Mercer UP, 1997). This groundbreaking book was followed by another very important one, Elizabeth C. Hirschman, *Melungeons: The Last Lost Tribe in America* (Macon: Mercer UP, 2005).

Project was heavily biased toward what its administrators called Core Melungeons.⁸⁷ Here is a break-down from the mitochondrial section, which had 70 members, 53 of whom shared their haplogroups, when we last checked.



Melungeon haplogroups according to Family Tree DNA.

Notice there are no American Indian haplogroups among Core Melungeons, even though the Jones survey in 2001 found levels of up to 5 percent Native American. Haplogroup H at 45.3% is even higher than we would expect of plain old U.S. whites. The only diversity that strikes the eye is the outsized percentage of L (African)—7.5% versus the general U.S. white population at 1.0%.

In 2009, Estes published, "Where Have All the Indians Gone." This brought the weary, predictable retort from Indians that they were still there. Estes was carrying on the tradition of Virginia DeMarce, who practiced the BIA's well-honed methods of paper genocide.⁸⁸ Estes and DeMarce both insisted people were trying to be something they were not:

Furthermore, as having Melungeon heritage became desirable and exotic, the range of where these people were reportedly found has

⁸⁷ Administrators for both projects are Jack Goins, Janet Crain, Larry Goins, Penny Ferguson and Roberta Estes according to the masthead.

⁸⁸ Virginia Easley DeMarce, "'Verry Slitly Mixt' [sic]: Tri-Racial Isolate Families of the Upper South – A Genealogical Study," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 80/1 (1992), pp. 24-45.

expanded to include nearly every state south of New England and east of the Mississippi, and in the words of Dr. Virginia DeMarce, Melungeon history has been erroneously expanded to provide "*an exotic ancestry...that sweeps in virtually every olive, ruddy and brown-tinged ethnicity known or alleged to have appeared anywhere in the pre-Civil War Southeastern United States.*"

Under these circumstances it was up to the Office of Recognition to act as a kind of consumer protection bureau.

More Controversy

Estes then joined Jack Goins, Penny Ferguson and Janet Crain in publishing the long-awaited report on their reorganized Melungeon DNA Project in July 2011. The title of the paper was "Melungeons: A Multiethnic Population." The paper's summary:

Many sources exist where the Melungeons identify themselves variously as Indians and Portuguese. Only one family, the Goins, are (sic) identified orally as having negro (sic) heritage. Given the physically dark appearance of the Melungeons, they have unquestionable heritage other than European.

People breathed a sigh of relief. Only one family had black. Thank goodness. It happens.

None of this really seemed like rocket science since the authors limited their sights to Ridgers who called themselves Portuguese to begin with, along with the Goinses, who had already identified themselves as having Sub-Saharan African.

Elsewhere in the article, one reads: "The Collins and Gibson founding lines, meaning Vardy Collins and Shephard 'Buck' Gibson were said to be Cherokee and stole the names of white men in Virginia. Their DNA indicates that if they were Native, it was not via their paternal line."

Comma splice. How do you steal a white man's name? I certainly hope no one's going to steal mine, but if they do they are welcome to it as it's a venerable old Hebrew anagram. Were Vardy and Buck Cherokee or not?

Another finding: "A link has been found through the Goins family to the Lumbee. The 'Smiling' Goins family was not thought to be an original Lumbee family, but subsequent research has shown that even though the group in 1915 was thought to be an 'outside' group, the ancestors of this group were found in 1770 with other founding Lumbee families." Here was another distinction without a difference.

And finally, the *raison d'être* of the article:

No evidence, (sic) historical, oral, genealogical or genetic has been found to support a Turkish, Middle Eastern, Jewish or Gypsy heritage.

Roberta Estes' killing off of the Lost Colony Indians won her "the Prestigious Paul Jehu Barringer, Jr. and Sr. Award of Excellence in grateful recognition of her Dedication and Devotion to Preserving and Perpetuating North Carolina's Rich History." Expecting similar accolades for laying to rest the Melungeon "mystery," Goins and his team sought and got national press coverage. But the reaction was not quite what they expected. What ensued was like a box of flying squirrels being dumped in the living room of a trailer during a tornado. All hell broke loose.

One of the revealing reactions to the team's research played out in the American Indian community. "Jack Goins Declares War on Indian Heritage" was the headline and genocide the watchword in an infuriated outcry from Scott Collins. Like most observers, Collins thought that the article "postulates that the 'Melungeons' are African Americans" (May 26, 2012):

This is a total bunk job and sheer genocidal activity against the Saponi, Lumbee, Occaneechi, Tutelo, Cherokee, Tuscarora, Haliwa and Powhatan and other Indian peoples of Appalachia. This same tactic was used back in the days of Walter A. Plecker, first registrar of vital statistics of Virginia. Plecker was bent on a campaign to cover Indian ancestry by calling anyone that claimed Indian ancestry to be African American (he used the term Negro at that time). Plecker was a White Supremacist and a member of the Anglo Saxon Club. He wrote and helped push for the Racial Integrity Act in Virginia.

Lest readers think the word genocide was being tossed about carelessly, Collins, a member of a non-federally-recognized American Indian tribe, went on to cite the articles of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Part of the agreed-upon definition of genocide was: causing mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part and imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.

Virginia DeMarce, who sounded the cavalry charge against Brent Kennedy's book about Melungeons in 1996, retired in 2004 after a forty-year career in the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Office of Recognition. Yes, she actually worked there. She did a heck-of-a job on Melungeons, just like Walter Plecker, Charles B. Davenport, William Harlen Gilbert, Jr., Edward T. Price, Calvin L. Beale, Thomas J. Harte and a host of others in the archives of

American racism.⁸⁹

People interested in the true story of Melungeons would have to await their day in court, just like those with Native American ancestry. Parenthetically, two other DNA projects at Family Tree DNA, the Mothers of Acadia and Blue Jacket Shawnee, also fell victims to Family Tree DNA's politics at the same time. Their data was ruthlessly discarded and administrators summarily replaced.

So much for citizen science and intellectual factories of consumers!

⁸⁹ The case can be followed in Phyllis E. Starnes and Donald N. Yates, *Ancestors and Enemies: Essays on Melungeons*, chap. 10, "Cyberfeud on the Ridge," pp. 157-79; there's also an audiobook and a podcast.