



Ukrainian Genealogy Group

National Capital Region

The Ukrainian Genealogist

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March 23rd 2021 Meeting

DNA Testing and Family History Research


In previous years, the UGG had several meetings dealing with DNA testing and results and these meetings proved to be popular topics. For the March webinar meeting, a panel of four UGG members provided information and their opinions on the value of DNA testing as part of their family history research. Jerry Fikis, UGG Treasurer, opened the webinar with an introduction on the value of DNA results and cautioned about privacy issues. It should be noted that the UGG does not endorse any particular DNA testing company.



**TONIGHT'S WEBINAR
IS ENTITLED:**

**DNA TESTING
AND
FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH**

OUR GUEST SPEAKERS:
CHRISTINE HABROWYCH; ZONIA KEYWAN;
MARIA RYPAN AND OKSANA YAROSH



March Webinar – DNA Panel

Jerry briefly described the basics of DNA and validity of DNA testing, definitions of 'Ethnicity', probability of 'Ethnicity' origins based on statistics and the genealogical results and significance. He also mentioned haplogroups, migration and related issues that were also included in the panelists' presentations.

Christine Habrowych stated that she was a beginning researcher and took the DNA test out of curiosity and to confirm her existing knowledge about her ethnicity. She took the Ancestry DNA test and received results that have since been updated. Christine was able to prepare a large family tree using documents, correspondence, notes and photographs relating to her family history. Common names and surnames are a problem in identifying 'relatives'. All of her DNA 'relatives' are in north America and none from Ukraine where she knows there are many cousins and relatives.

Maria Rypan was encouraged to take the DNA tests as a result of her visits to Ukraine and meeting relatives. She took some Ontario Genealogical Society courses to familiarize herself with the testing procedures and methods. Some of her family members also took the Ancestry DNA tests. Later there were tests from My Heritage DNA that has a focus on eastern Europe. Although there were some similarities in DNA results, Maria found inconsistencies especially in the percentage of origins from various geographical groups as depicted in 'pie-charts'. Maria gave an example where DNA results and family stories led to research for a lost relative in Saskatchewan. She concluded her presentation with the realization that the DNA tests were useful but more research is required to complete her family tree.

Zonia Keywan became interested in the National Geographic Genome Project and submitted a DNA sample for testing. She received some fairly general information on her origins in eastern and western Europe dating to the pre-historic period. She was invited to

participate in a Karaite study based on her mother's origins. Zonia gave a brief introduction to the religious history of the Karaites in western Ukraine and her family connection. She continued her research based on family stories and her own visits to historic sites in Ukraine. She has established contacts with members of the Karaite community but has not been able to answer all the questions about her family history and plans to continue her research.

Oksana Yarosh explained that she became interested in the DNA tests for a number of reasons: through advertisements, the search for lost relatives, scientific curiosity and also, as an interesting family project. She was particularly motivated because little is known about her father's family history and, as a result of a possible connection with Scandinavia on her mother's side. Not all members of her family took the DNA tests because of privacy concerns. This interest in their DNA grew and her family even took a Baltic and Scandinavian tour. The DNA tests from Ancestry and My Heritage were not consistent and there were evolving 'Ethnicity' estimates. She has sent out inquiries to possible 'relatives' based on the DNA tests and she has also replied to inquiries related to her research. Oksana concluded her presentation with the acknowledgement that more research is required in Lviv Oblast archives, and also contacts with Ukrainian historians in the field of Baltic/Scandinavian connections.

Mike Dowhan made some concluding remarks on the panelists' presentations. Although, there were some common 'threads', there was a variety of opinions on the DNA results and the value of DNA tests. Mike also gave some examples from his own family history research and locating possible relatives. He also suggested that some of the panelists and Jerry Fikis may be related because their ancestors come from the same area in Ukraine but this is a subject for further research.

The presentation was followed by a question-and-answer session.

April 27th Webinar

Our April Webinar by Prof. Andriy Zayarnyuk is based on his book entitled: *Framing the Ukrainian Peasantry in Habsburg Galicia, 1846-1914*. For anyone interested in a copy of this book, it can be ordered on the publisher's website: <https://www.ciuspress.com/>

Moreover, Prof Zayarnyuk's PhD dissertation can also be found in Library and Archives Canada: *Andriy Zayarnyuk, Framing the Ukrainian Peasantry in Habsburg Galicia: 1846-1914 (With Focus on the Sambir Area)*, PhD University of Alberta, 2003.

<https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/theses/canada/vol2/001/nq88073.pdf>

YouTube Videos – Ukrainian Topics

Submitted by Nadia Kazymyra

Memorial celebrated at the St. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in North Melbourne, Australia honouring its parishioners who died in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qe9rdwhtEQc>

A train ride through parts of present-day Ukraine with Chris Tarrant. He covers some historic events, political realities and current adjustments to the effects of soviet rule. The visuals and Tarrant's dialogue offer an intriguing look at life today in Ukraine: <https://youtu.be/kaGk-TIRJAo>.

Interesting facts about each Oblast (Province) in Ukraine. This video is in Ukrainian: <https://youtu.be/uXmC-NOC6f8>

Ukrainian TV Series “Saga”

For those who subscribe to Amazon Prime, there is a 2020 drama series entitled “*Saga*” a twelve-episode drama, telling the story of the Kozak family. The story starts before WWI and continues throughout the 20th century going through the many different hardships and challenges of the Ukrainian people – wars, Holodomor, and changes in the political course.

In Ukrainian with English subtitles.